‘BGRT hike is just a proposal; it’s now up to the Legislature’ PAGE 3
A rare look at Japan nuclear plant as it prepares to release radioactive water. PAGE 7

Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 145
MONDAY JULY 24, 2023
www.saipantribune.com
www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

$1

Libday fest ends with a literal bang

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of families and individuals flocked to the Liberation Day Festival grounds at Garapan Fishing Base last Saturday to see the night’s firework show, making the crowd the largest since the beginning of the festivities and closing out the festivities to mark the 77th Liberation Day in the CNMI.

After nearly a 30-minute delay due to pouring rain and other circumstances, the firework show lasted close to 10 minutes but it was one that left several individuals saying

See LIBDAY on Page 4

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Hundreds of spectators gathered last Saturday for the last night of the 77th Liberation Day festivities and the 2023 edition of the firework show at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai .

Census: 38% below poverty level

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

- 84% have broadband internet subscription
- 20.6% of households received food stamps; 71% rented housing units; 39% spoke Philippine languages

Of the 47,035 people in the CNMI who were counted in 2020, a total of 17,876 or 38% had income below the poverty level, according to a U.S. Census Bureau report released on Thursday.

According to the 2020 Island Areas Censuses Demographic and Housing Characteristics Summary File, Commonwealth households were asked about their income the previous year (in 2019) and the results showed that 20.6% of households received

See CENSUS on Page 4

‘TOUCHBACK’ COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the “touchback” rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
68

$30K bail for man who allegedly shot woman with a pellet gun

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $30,000 cash bail on a man who allegedly shot a woman with a pellet gun.

Sergio M. Rangamar, 46, appeared before Superior

See $30K on Page 4

HAALAND VISITS SAIPAN OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, assistant USDOI secretary Carmen Cantor, and deputy assistant to the President & Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander senior liaison Erika Moritsugu listen to cultural historian Genevieve Cabrera explain the history and significance of Kalabera Cave during a tour of Saipan. Haaland, Cantor, and Moritsugu visited the CNMI last Friday as part of their weeklong visit to the Pacific Islands. ***Story on Page 5.***

INSIDE

LOCAL
Saipan Mayor Ramon “RB” Jose Blas Camacho recently paid a goodwill visit to Japan.
PAGE 11

ASIA
China sent warplanes, including fighter jets and bombers, toward Taiwan in a forceful display.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
Tony Bennett, the eminent and timeless singer, has died at 96, two weeks before his birthday.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

More NMC graduates pass the NCLEX-RN exam

Northern Marianas College nursing graduates Leugim "Lance" Elayda, Seung Jun Cha, Jan Bobadilla, and Maya Shimizu have recently joined the long list of NMC students who have passed the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses, or NCLEX-RN.

Nursing graduates must pass this exam to be able to practice nursing. The exam tests the knowledge, skills, and abilities of nursing graduates in order to certify that they are capable of applying entry level nursing practices correctly.

"I am incredibly proud of Lance, Seung Jun, Jan, and Maya for passing the NCLEX-RN," said NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero. "Their success reflects their hard work and dedication to the nursing profession, and I have no doubt they will positively impact the healthcare community."

NMC Nursing Department chair Rosa Aldan also congratulated the four. "We extend our heartfelt congratulations to…Lance, Seung Jun, Jan, and Maya for their remarkable achievement…," Aldan said. "I am confident that they will make significant contributions to the nursing community."

Elayda, a 2022 NMC nursing graduate, pursued this field due to his passion for helping others. He expresses his gratitude toward his nursing instructors for their guidance.

"Mr. Johnny Aldan and Mrs. Rosa T. Aldan were stellar instructors, along with Dr. Annie Camacho and Mrs. Breanna Lee," Elayda said. "Nursing is very broad and there are so many cases and skills to go through, but they knew how to deliver these subjects in a way that made us want to learn more."

Elayda advises nursing students to take the NCLEX-RN as soon as possible after graduation. "A lot of people are scared to take it because it seems like this big test that will determine their career, but nursing students are a lot more capable than they think," he said.

Today, Elayda is a registered nurse at CHCC in the Medical-Surgical Unit.

Bobadilla

Elayda

Shimizu

Cha

Cha graduated from NMC with a nursing degree in 2016, and worked as a graduate nurse at CHCC before serving his mandatory military service in Korea. It was then that he realized he wanted to continue where he left off in his nursing career and become a registered nurse.

Cha's motivation for pursuing a nursing degree was his innate desire to help and care for others, wanting to make positive impacts in their lives. "It's really special that you can feel satisfied knowing that you can make a difference. Pursuing this degree gave me an opportunity to explore and understand the pathophysiology of diseases, what to expect, and implement the best measures of quality care", Cha said.

In his advice to students who are looking to take the NCLEX-RN in the future, Cha emphasizes the impact of giving yourself enough time to study, and that this can be done by watching videos covering NCLEX-RN topics as well as knowing your priorities.

Cha has applied to work as a registered nurse at CHCC. His application is being processed and confirmed by CHCC to be assigned in the Medical-Surgical Unit.

Having graduated this year with a nursing degree, Bobadilla pursued the medical sector with his biggest passion in life being caring and advocating for others. "Because I wanted to stay on the island and give back to my community, getting my A.S. Nursing degree at NMC was really a no-brainer," he said.

A major factor that contributed toward his passing the exam was studying early. "Doing this allowed me to recognize my weaknesses early and focus on them," Bobadilla said. "As soon as I strengthened those weaknesses, I took it as early as possible, which allowed me to use the knowledge that I gained in nursing school while it was still fresh on my mind."

Bobadilla encourages students who plan to take the NCLEX-RN to study the topics they need more work on. "Take the time to study hard and work on the content areas that you are most weak in, then take the NCLEX ASAP. I hope everyone passes the NCLEX, and I'll see you at the bedside," he said.

Bobadilla is currently working as a graduate nurse at CHCC; however he has attained a certified nursing assistant license prior to becoming a graduate nurse. He has applied to work as a registered nurse at CHCC and his application is being processed and confirmed to work in the Medical-Surgical Unit.

Shimizu, a classmate of Bobadilla, believes that nursing provides an opportunity to make direct impacts on individuals, families, and communities. "Knowing that I am able to help people during a difficult time or educating them about healthy living makes being a nurse worth it," she said.

Like Elayda, Shimizu highlights the guidance of her instructors in helping her prepare for the exam. "The weekly Kaplan sessions were very helpful and helped me understand how the NCLEX works. I would also like to thank the wonderful instructors who were very encouraging and helped me build a solid foundation," Shimizu said.

She emphasizes the importance of studying before taking the NCLEX-RN. "My advice would be to develop a study plan that works for you. What worked for me was using the provided Kaplan test prep program and doing questions daily," Shimizu said.

Shimizu is currently in the process of applying to CHCC to work as a registered nurse. ***(PR)***

Customers First
TRIPLE J
Payless SuperFresh & Truckload Store
PROMO FROM: July 24 - July 30, 2023
LIMITED EDITION ECO BAG
700 POINTS
SUMMER of SAVINGS
WIRELESS CAMERA PIXEL: 720-1080P
NOW! $6.95 WAS: $7.95
SHARK ROCKET CORD STICK VACCUM
NOW! $89.95 WAS: $102.95
FLYWHEEL STATIONARY EXERCISE BIKE
NOW! $169.95 WAS: $199.95
HONG MA 4FT CENTER FOLDING TABLE
NOW! $32.95 WAS: $37.95
10QT ALUM DUTCH OVEN W/ GLASS LID METALLIC RED
NOW! $29.95 WAS: $34.95
STERILITE - TOTE BOX 30 GAL
NOW! $65.95 WAS: $72.95
BEACH CHAIR
NOW! $19.95 WAS: $27.95
TREADMILL MANUAL
NOW! $189.95 WAS: $235.95
HONG MA 6FT FOLD-IN-HALF BENCH
NOW! $26.95 WAS: $31.95
PRIVACY SHELTER TENT 4"X4"X7"
NOW! $49.95 WAS: $55.95
Customers First! Rewards Plus!
EXPLORE YOUR REWARDS!
EXCLUSIVE OFFERS FOR PAYLESS SUPERFRESH REWARDS MEMBERS!
DID YOU KNOW?
YOUR POINTS ARE PRINTED AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR RECEIPT
STERILITE 4 SLOT WHITE CADDY
1100 POINTS
THROW PILLOW
700 POINTS
HOME BASICS - MUG SET 11OZ 6PC
2200 POINTS
PLASTIC CHAIR WITH SIDE ARM
1100 POINTS
DAHDOUL - CURTAIN ROD LARGE (60-120")
1400 POINTS
WE ACCEPT FOODSTAMPS!
Tel: (670) 234-1444
@paylesssuperfreshtruckloadstore
Open 7AM-9PM Daily

'BGRT hike just a proposal; it's up to Legislature'

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said Thursday that he does not want to raise taxes, but he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang don't have a choice but propose to increase the Business Gross and Revenue Tax in his fiscal year 2024 budget plan as they are looking to raise an additional $9.1 million.

"It's a proposal. We need to get $9.1 million regardless—we've got to find $9.1 million whether it's different fees, different types of taxes, new types of taxes, [or] suspension of rebates," said Palacios at a press briefing in his office's conference room.

Knowing the CNMI's predicament gives them no other choice but submit to the Legislature a proposal for a.5% increase in the BGRT tax for certain brackets, he said.

Speaking before the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's fiscal year 2024 budget hearing last July 14, Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita said the administration's proposed budget for the government's operations includes a one-time increase in the BGRT beginning in the second quarter of fiscal year 2024 for an additional estimated revenue of $9.1 million. The proposed increase will only apply in fiscal year 2024.

Palacios said there are other possibilities and that he will leave that to the Legislature.

He said proposals to increase taxes have been submitted before when the economy and tax collection were in distress, so it's not anything new.

"Contrary to what some people believe, it's not hidden [nor] buried anywhere. That's how it is. It's a proposal," the governor pointed out.

The other option, Palacios said, is what Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) had already stated—that they might have to take a look at the expenditure part.

"I have to make that difficult choice and sometimes you don't want to do something, but you don't have a choice," he said.

Palacios said the other choices are direr and will impact more people—most of them vulnerable. One of those choices is to do away with the 25% pension payment to retirees, and that's $13 million a year the government pays.

"But do I want to do that and impact our retirees who are dependent on that?" the governor asked.

He said the budget process is in the Legislature and he is still waiting for lawmakers to start doing what they need to do to figure out whether the proposed tax increase is something that they can support.

If not, Palacios said, then the lawmakers can come up with other proposals that could generate the $9.1 million.

"It is now up to the Legislature to take a look at that proposal and either tweak it, amend it, [or] do away with it and come up with another proposal. It could be a different proposal that generates the needed revenue or a different proposal to get rid of some of the expenditures," he said.

The CNMI government's fiscal situation has become so dire that just figuring out how the administration is going to come up with the money for the next payroll is keeping them up most nights, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang said. "It's not easy. So we have to come up with some initiatives," he said.

He said they don't want to raise any tax, but sometimes it's necessary to go that way.

Even the U.S. Congress is always talking about taxes, Apatang said.

"We are just asking people to work with us. We are working very hard to ensure that we will fully recover, back to normalcy," he said.

Under the governor's proposal, businesses whose earnings range between $100,000 and $250,000 will see a .5% increase in their BGRT. Those that make between $500,000 and $750,000 will see a 2% increase, while those that make above $750,000 will see a 1% increase.

Based on the current BGRT schedule, the rate is 1.5% for business taxpayers that make between $5,000 and $50,000; for those earning $50,000 to $100,000 it's 2%; above $100,000 to $250,00 is 2.5%; above $250,000 to $500,000 is 3%; above $500,000 to $750,000 is 4%; and above $750,000 and over is 5%.

ARMATECH

Parking Management System Installer

Tel: (670) 234-8895 | Email: armatech.saipan@gmail.com
Mobile: (670) 287-5525 / (670) 783-8895

Job Vacancy Announcement

Graphic Designer (Saipan, MP)

Job Duties
- Provide drafting and design services by preparing and maintaining graphic drawings that compile to create a set of architectural plans;
- Prepare graphic designs from general instruction and preliminary sketches, diagrams, or schematics;
- Prepare drawings from conceptual plan to Development Plan and construction record drawings;
- Make sure of CAD to prepare engineering drawings consisting of plans, sections, and details from rough sketches to established standards and procedures;
- Ensure compliance with required design safety factors, tolerances, and specifications.

Requirements
- Associate's Degree or Equivalent; Major(s) and/or field(s) of study in Architecture/Architectural Studies/Eco-Friendly Architecture.
- At least 24 months of work experience as a graphic designer is required;

Please send a resume and transcript to
BE TO CORPORATION, Attn: Da Young CHUNG at
P.O. Box 7670 SVRB, Saipan, MP 96950.

ARTMAN CORPORATION

SERVICES will be:
- Sewer Pumping
- Snake Wiring
- Portable Toilet Rental
- Portable Hand Wash Station
- Handling Recyclable Wastes

PMB 122 Box 10000
MP 96950, Lower Base
artmancorporation@gmail.com
Please Call: 234-8079 | 287-8079

Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

OUR PLATFORM

No matter which advertising platform you choose, we can help you deliver your ad message to your target audience

Pinned FB post
FB Video
FB Stories (Poll. Swipe Up)
▶ FACEBOOK

IG Post
IG Stories
▶ INSTAGRAM

Banner Skycraper
Right Tile
TAGA Plus
▶ WEB

FOR MORE ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES, CALL (670) 235-NEWS (6397)

DOI announces nearly $300M to support, expand outdoor recreation

WASHINGTON—The Department of the Interior is distributing $295,582,830 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to all 50 states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.

The CNMI will be receiving $2,136,027, while Guam will get $2,197,229. American Samoa is allotted $2,136,899 , while the U.S. Virgin Islands will get $2,161,741.

Recent changes to the LWCF Manual guide states to work more closely with Tribal Nations and clarify eligibility to ensure all federally recognized Tribes can take part in and support future public outdoor recreation and conservation projects. The funds from this year's distribution will be available until fiscal year 2025.

"The Land and Water Conservation Fund helps further President [Joe] Biden's commitment to investing in America's lands and waters, expanding access to the outdoors, and safeguarding the environment," said Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. "These grants, matched primarily by state and local governments, will inspire collaborative conservation and improves equitable access to the outdoors for all."

Along with this year's LWCF distribution, the National Park Service is releasing an update to the LWCF Manual that directs states to work more closely with Tribes and underserved communities during the development of their Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans, a requirement for eligibility to receive LWCF funds. It also prioritizes the creation of parks in underserved communities. While Tribes were already eligible to receive LWCF grants, the changes to the Manual are intended to clarify this availability and encourage Tribal governments to apply for these funds.

"All communities are deserving of local outdoor recreation," said National Park Service director Chuck Sams. "Through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the National Park Service is proud to help communities and local governments upgrade and create new outdoor spaces that are most beneficial and enriching to their community, so that everyone is able to take part in outdoor recreation close to home."

Since its inception in 1965, LWCF has funded $5.2 billion to support more than 45,000 projects in every county in the country. At no cost to taxpayers, LWCF which is administered by the National Park Service, supports increased public access to and protection for federal public lands and waters — including national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and recreation areas — and provides matching grants to Tribal, state and local governments to support the acquisition and development of land for public parks and other outdoor recreation sites.

The allocation for each state and territory is determined through a formula set in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and is largely population-based. States and territories further allocate these funds to local projects, usually through a competitive process.

These investments help support the Biden-Harris administration's "America the Beautiful" initiative by supporting locally led outdoor recreation and conservation projects to protect and enhance our nation's public lands and waters. ***(PR)***

$30K

From page 1

Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho last Friday morning for a bail hearing after he was arrested and charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, two counts of assault, and two counts of disturbing the peace.

Camacho imposed a $20,000 cash bail on the defendant and remanded him to the custody of the Department of Corrections. He was ordered to return to court for a preliminary hearing on July 28 at 10am, with his arraignment scheduled for Aug. 7 at 9am.

According to court documents, the Department of Public Safety responded to an alleged shooting incident last Wednesday, July 19, at the String Beans Avenue in Chalan Laulau at 6:45pm.

The victim told DPS investigators that she and her boyfriend were walking home from buying groceries at XO Market when Rangamar yelled at them from a heavy machine equipment. The victim said she recognized Rangamar as he is related to her children's father.

The victim then said Rangamar went inside his house and, upon coming out, ran toward them holding a rifle that was described by the victim as the one "the green toy soldiers carry."

Rangamar allegedly fired two or three shots at the victim, with one hitting her right ankle. The victim told investigators that she felt like she was "going to die" and did not know she was injured due to shock and fear.

LEIGH GASES

Sergio M. Rangamar, 46, is escorted out of the Superior Court after a bail hearing last Friday morning.

The victim then said Rangamar turned the gun toward her boyfriend and started shooting in his direction until the magazine fell out. Rangamar then picked it up, put it back in, and pointed the gun at the victim before yelling, "You better get the f___ away from here!"

The victim's boyfriend then carried her away from the area before he called the police. The victim told investigators that Rangamar walked away from them "as if nothing had happened."

When investigators interviewed the victim's boyfriend, he said that Rangamar ran at them with the rifle and said, "You better start running," but they stayed still due to shock. The victim's boyfriend said he did not know Rangamar.

A police report stated that an empty Crosman .22 caliber pellet container was found in the outside garage secured between a beam and gutter. Due to the condition of the container, it appeared to have been recently purchased.

A DPS press release last Wednesday night first reported the incident, then another release later that evening said the suspect had been arrested without incident.

LIBDAY

From page 1

the show had some of the best fireworks they've ever seen at the Liberation Day Festival.

During the festivities' closing ceremony, 2023 Liberation Day Committee chair Nadine Deleon Guerrero shared her appreciation for all the hard work of the committee members, all community partners, sponsors, and supporters. She also shared her appreciation for the donations from the offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor, House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), House floor leader Rep. Ed Propst (D-Saipan), and Rep. Joe Flores (Ind-Saipan) in making the night's fireworks possible.

While awaiting the fireworks, the stage was filled with performances by various dance groups, LDC 2023 Battle of the Band's winners Sugarking, the Drag Queens and Budweiser, MARPAC, and Paul Guerrero sponsored group Biggah and Bettah from Guam.

The 2023 festivities began last July 1, with the theme "Resilience Rising," to signify the CNMI's ongoing recovery from Typhoon Soudelor, Super Typhoon Yutu, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recent devastation of Typhoon Mawar on Rota and Guam.

CENSUS

From page 1

benefits from the Nutrition Assistance Plan or food stamps.

Also, it found that the median household income increased from $23,839 in 2009 (when the Census last counted and in 2019 inflation-adjusted dollars) to just $31,362 in 2019.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) stated in his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend that the Census' statistics are crucial to ensuring that U.S. Congress, along with federal departments and agencies, make well-informed decisions on policies affecting the insular areas.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, on housing characteristics in 2020, it found that the majority of households, or 84%, had broadband internet subscription.

Among all households, 60.8% had a desktop or laptop computer; 94.9% had a smartphone; and 48.2% had a tablet or other portable wireless device.

Most or 71% occupied housing units were rented, and 29% were owned.

The median home value was $184,200, while the median monthly gross rent was $502.

Census said that 7.2% of homeowners and 17.4% of renters spent 35% or more of household income on housing costs.

The Census found that the CNMI had a population of 47,329 in 2020, with 24,892 males (52.6%) and 22,437 females (47.4%).

The report states that 5.9% of the population was ages 65 or over and 0.2% was ages 85 or over. Children ages 0-17 made up of 28.8% of the population, while the median age was 34.4 years.

As for social characteristics in 2020, over one in five (21.5%) households consisted of only one person.

The majority (59.4%) of the 10,015 family households were married-couple families.

The census found that 5.8% of households, or 825 households, had a female householder with no spouse or partner present and children of the householder who were under 18 years old.

There were 2,315 cohabiting couple households, representing 16.2% of all households. Among family households, 13% were multigenerational.

Over two-thirds (69.4%) of women ages 15 and over had ever given birth.

The median length of marriage for currently married men ages 15 and over was 17.6 years, compared to 16.6 years for currently married women.

Among adults ages 30 and over, 8.9% were grandparents who lived with their own grandchildren under 18.

Of grandparents living with their grandchildren under the age of 18, 49.3% were responsible for their basic needs. The majority (51.7%) of grandparents caring for grandchildren under 18 had been responsible for them for at least five years.

Among the population 5 years and older in households who moved between April 1, 2015, and April 1, 2020, 27.5% reported natural disaster as their primary reason for moving.

Of the population ages 3 and over in households, 74% spoke a language other than English at home. Of those who spoke a language other than English, 52.5% spoke English "very well" and 39% spoke Philippine languages.

The majority (85.6%) of the population age 25 and older had a high school degree, and 21% had a bachelor's degree or higher. The most common bachelor's degree was in business.

The Census statistics includes over 400 tables with data on age, race and ethnicity, household type, relationship, population in group quarters, whether the residence is owned or rented (tenure), vacancy status and other social, economic, housing and demographic characteristics.

In addition, data are available for island-specific geographies, including municipalities, districts and villages.

Vets exposed to toxins taught how to file claims with VA

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Veterans wait at the Department of Veteran Affairs' PACT Act Clinic last Thursday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan.

Three members of the Honolulu Veterans Affairs Regional Office, along with a Saipan- stationed Veteran Benefits Administration member, held an outreach last Thursday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in order to assist military veterans in the CNMI who were exposed to toxic substances while in active service.

Called the Department of Veteran Affairs PACT Act Clinic, VA benefits counselors assisted veterans on how to make a claim and helped them check their claim status, as well as answer any questions they may have. The clinic started at 12pm and concluded at 5pm, and serviced a rough estimate of 20 veterans.

Honolulu VA Regional Office director Stacey Bonnett and program analyst/public affairs officer Aiko Shibuya both consider the day a success as they were able to serve all the veterans that came that day.

"I think this was a good turnout," said Bonnett "And we were able to see everyone that came and helped them [to] either file their claim or check on a status or answer their questions. ...So yes, it's a very successful event."

They said they specifically came for the clinic. "We're here... to help veterans file a claim for compensation disability if they have not already done so or they can check on a status of their claim if they already have one pending or if they just have questions about what benefits are available to them through the VA."

Both Bonnett and Shibuya said that even after their team leaves, veterans can still avail of services, whether making an inquiry, filing a claim, or checking on that claim. They could simply work with Willie Peterson, the Veteran Benefits Administration employee stationed on Saipan, at the CNMI Office of Veteran Services. Peterson's office is open weekly from Monday to Friday 8am-3:30pm and veterans may call to inquire, or make a visit by either appointment or walk-ins.

With the recent passage of the PACT Act on Aug. 10, 2022, VA benefits were expanded to veterans who were exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances.

Also if a veteran files a PACT Act claim that is a part of that law change within a year of that date (Aug. 10, 2022), the VA can pay back to the day when the law became effective.

"We are coming up on that one year date for the passage of that PACT Act. Once that date has elapsed, veterans can still file PACT Act claims with us. It's just we will no longer able to go back to the one year retroactive to the day of the law change. [But] veterans can still file and still submit claims with us even after that," Bonnett said.

Faith, Hope and
KARIDAT
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) FULL-TIME SHELTER WORKER

Interested applicant can email info@karidat.org to receive a position description and a fillable application form.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: A complete application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of a valid CNMI Driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2023 AT 4:00 PM.

COSMETOLOGIST: K'S INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION. SAIPAN, CNMI

Keep work stations clean and sanitize tools, such as scissors and combs. Bleach, dye, or tint hair, using applicator or brush. Cut, trim and shape hair or hairpieces, based on customers' instructions, hair type and facial features, using clippers, scissors, trimmers and razors. Schedule client appointments. Update and maintain customer information records, such as beauty services provided. Demonstrate and sell hair care products and cosmetics. Analyze patrons' hair and other physical features to determine and recommend beauty treatment or suggest hair styles. Shampoo, rinse, condition, and dry hair and scalp or hairpieces with water, liquid soap, or other solutions. Order, display, and maintain supplies. Comb, brush, and spray hair or wigs to set style. Develop new styles and techniques. Apply water, setting, straightening or waving solutions to hair and use curlers, rollers, hot combs and curling irons to press and curl hair. Shape eyebrows and remove facial hair, using depilatory cream, tweezers, electrolysis or wax. Administer therapeutic medication and advise patron to seek medical treatment for chronic or contagious scalp conditions. Recommend and explain the use of cosmetics, lotions, and creams to soften and lubricate skin and enhance and restore natural appearance. Clean, shape, and polish fingernails and toenails, using files and nail polish. Give facials to patrons, using special compounds, such as lotions and creams. Train or supervise other hairstylists, hairdressers and assistants. Operate cash registersto receive payments from patrons.

Minimum Requirements: High School diploma and 12 months experience required.
Salary: $ 7.88 - $8.00 per hour.

Workplace: SAN JOSE VILLAGE Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to
K'S INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION., PO BOX 501981, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to kssalon96950@gmail.com
Job Number – KS-2023-01

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC
Available for Public Review & Comment
PY2023 Annual Action Plan
July 11, 2023

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) announces the availability for public review and comment, the Program Year 2023 Annual Action Plan (AAP).

The AAP is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Community Planning and Development, for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds received by NMHC. NMHC is the Grantee of these HUD funds. NMHC administers CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs on behalf of the CNMI.

The PY2023 AAP identifies NMHC's proposed use of HUD PY2023 CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds totaling $1,550,603.00. A detailed list of the proposed projects and activities are shown below.

Community Development Block Grant		Project Sponsor	Project Type	Project Type
1	Childcare Facility (Rota)	Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA)	Public Facility	$ 450,000.00
2	Multi-Purpose Stage Facility (Rota)	Office of the Mayor of Rota	Public Facility	$230,000.00
4	Community Pavilion Shelters (Rota)	Office of the Mayor of Rota	Public Facility	$104,100.00
5	Planning and Administrative Costs	Northern Marianas Housing Corporation	Planning and Administrative Costs	$196,025.00
	Total			**$980,125.00**
Emergency Solutions Grant		**Project Sponsor**	**Project Type**	**Project Type**
7	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Assistance/ Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services	NMHC	Homeless Prevention/ Rapid Rehousing	$ 68,119.25
8	ESG Administrative Cost	NMHC	Program Administration	$ 6,090.75
9	Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	NMHC	HMIS	$ 7,000.00
	Total			**$ 81,210.00**
HOME Investment Partnership Grant		**Project Sponsor**	**Project Type**	**Project Type**
10	HOME Rehabilitation/ Homebuyer New Construction Program	NMHC	Affordable Housing	$ 415,877.80
11	HOME Administration	NMHC	Program Administration	$ 73,390.20
	Total			**$ 489,268.00**

The AAP will be available electronically on NMHC's website at www.nmhcgov.net. If you would like to obtain a copy or require additional information please contact Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director at 234-6866 or by email at deputydirector@nmhcgov.net.

NMHC is inviting the public to comment on the proposed AAP. A public hearing will be held on Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 5:00 pm at the NMHC Main Office Conference Room, Garapan; Tinian Field Office, San Jose Tinian-NMC Bldg. A; Rota Field Office, Sinapalo III

Any person(s), agency, or organization wishing to comment on the AAP are encouraged to do so by submitting written comments to the NMHC main office at Garapan, Saipan, and/or to the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, no later than 4:30 pm Friday, August 11, 2023. Written comments may also be submitted via facsimile at (670)234-9021 or by submitting via email to deputydirector@nmhcgov.net. Comments must be received no later than 4:30 pm Friday, August 11, 2023. Should you require special accommodations, please contact Ms. Mafnas, at the NMHC main office, at 670-234-6866.

Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director
This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD CPD funds

AIR CONDITION AND REFRIGERATION MECHANIC: COCA COLA BEVERAGE CO. (MICRONESIA) INC. SAIPAN, CNMI

Install and repair refrigerating systems, adjust or replace worn or defective mechanism and parts and reassembles repaired system. Troubleshoot post-mix machines, ice maker, freezer, chiller or clients & customers. Troubleshoot air condition system of the company office/building and company vehicles. Discuss and address system malfunctions with the supervisor, identify and recommend resolution. Prepares and submit company required job order report, parts order and keep good record of the same, conducts preventive maintenance of air conditioning and refrigeration systems, coolers, freezers and other mechanical equipment, including but not limited to inventory of parts and services needed. Repairs or troubleshoot electronic devices in the office and properties of company affiliates (e.g. microwave oven, signage, fire alarm, telephone lines, etc.). Perform other related duties and special projects as assigned.

Other requirements:
Associate Degree or Vocational course in Air conditioning and Refrigeration, 24 months experience in air-condition and refrigeration.

Salary: $ 9.70 - $13.11 per hour.

Workplace: CHALAN PALE ARNOLD CHALAN LAULAU Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to
COCA COLA BEVERAGE CO. (MICRONESIA) INC., PO BOX 500266, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to spn_hr@subwaypacific.com
Job Number – COKE-2023-01

Haaland visit highlights investments to protect resources

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland kicked off a weeklong visit to the Pacific Islands last week in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, where she highlighted the Biden-Harris administration's ongoing commitment to protecting and investing in the natural and cultural resources of the U.S. territory.

Haaland, Assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor and deputy assistant to the President and Asian American and Pacific Islander senior liaison Erika L. Moritsugu met with CNMI Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang to discuss the ongoing recovery from Typhoon Mawar and the importance of preserving the cultural history of the territory. Haaland and her delegation affirmed the Biden-Harris administration's unwavering commitment to supporting the people of the CNMI.

Haaland also announced $1,146,133 in Office of Insular Affairs Technical Assistance Program grant funds for the territory to support the following projects:

■ $465,035 for the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Operating Room Imaging System;

■ $250,000 for Typhoon Mawar emergency and recovery support;

■ $241,423 for the CNMI Labor Force Survey;

■ $132,775 for the CNMI Prevailing Wage Study; and

■ $56,900 for CNMI Veterans Health Transportation for Rota and Tinian.

The funding provided for Typhoon Mawar recovery support responds to Biden's emergency declaration for the CNMI, which directed federal partners to support and supplement Commonwealth and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Typhoon Mawar on May 22, 2023.

While on Saipan, Haaland toured CHCC, which has received funds from OIA for a number of projects, including a recent grant for a new imaging system in the operating room. She also visited natural and cultural resources across the island, including Bird Island and Kalabera Cave, which has also been a recipient of OIA funding support. She also honored American veterans by laying a wreath at the American Memorial Park Court of Honor.

In addition to the grants announced by the secretary on Saipan, OIA provided $1,608,516 in fiscal year 2023 TAP funds in June for financial management needs and priorities identified as urgent needs in the territory by Palacios.

Haaland's visit highlighted how Biden's Investing in America agenda is making significant investments in climate resilience and ecosystem restoration in CNMI. Through the Inflation Reduction Act, the department is providing over $2.7 million to CNMI for numerous priority climate resilience projects, including to restore and rehabilitate Jeffrey's Beach; improve stormwater infrastructure at Tanapag Middle School and the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School; rehabilitate the shoreline at Tanapag Beach Park and the Lower Base Lift Station; update the CNMI Stormwater Management Manual; and other projects.

The department has made another $5.5 million available to the U.S. territories, including CNMI, to provide domestic water supplies to households that do not have potable water. To date, $115.8 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding has been provided by the administration to the CNMI. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-23-025

AGAG BOOSTER PUMP AND ELECTRICAL SYSTEM UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Agag Booster Pump and Electrical System Upgrade in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of upgrading the existing Agag Booster Pump Station (AG); rehabilitation of existing Agag concrete sump tank, yard piping, aboveground flowmeter and valve station with concrete pad, and all other appurtenances at the Agag site; renovation of the existing chlorine and electrical building; installation of a new booster pump (triplex system); construction of a new perimeter security fencing and facility lighting at the Agag site; and site improvements and grading. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 185 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **July 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-23-025, Agag Booster Pump and Electrical System Upgrade"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) August 2, 2023,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on July 17, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Dennis Formalejo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician via address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

BLACK MICRO CORPORATION

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Black Micro Corporation is recruiting a Site Safety and Health Officer (SSHO) position for its Tinian projects who meet the following requirements:

- Must have at least five (5) years of continuous construction or general industry safety experience in supervising and managing general construction.
- Credentials as a Safety Trained Supervisor-Construction (STS-C) or Construction Health and Safety Technician (CHST), is a plus.
- Must have completed a 30 Hour OSHA Construction or General Industry or approved equivalent safety class within the last 5 years and a 40 Hour EM-385-1-1 class within the last 3 years.
- Must have completed an average of at least 24 hours of formal safety training in the following competencies: fall protection, scaffolding, trench/excavation, confined space, hazardous energy and health hazard recognition each year for the past 5 years.

Salary is negotiable.

Submit resume with certificates to:

BLACK MICRO CORPORATION
Saluda St., Lower Navy Hill
PMB 766, Box 10001 Saipan, MP 96950
Contact Person: Remi Sablan
(670) 322-4861 (office) • (670) 785-2598 (cell)
Email: remedios@blackguam.com

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC)

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

Tels: (670) 234-9447
234-6866
234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021

PUBLIC NOTICE
07/11/2023

Notice for Public Comment
Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Program Year/ IDIS No.:	Program	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget:	Proposed Reprogramming Amount:	Proposed Revised Project Budget:	Current IDIS Funded Amount:
IDIS# 737	CDBG	PY2020 CDBG Planning and Administrative Costs		$192,240.00	($30,000.00)	$162,240.00	$192,240.00
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:			**($30,000.00)**		
IDIS# 762		Purchase of (2) Rescue Watercraft Vehicles and (2) All-Terrain Vehicles for the CNMI DFEMS	Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS)	$106,000.00	$30,000.00	$136,000.00	$106,000.00
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:			**($30,000.00)**		

Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) publishes a "Public Notice" on reprogramming funds from Planning and Administrative Cost to a project activity, which constitutes as a substantial amendment. Therefore, any comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan, and to the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, on or before August 11, 2023, no later than 4:30 P.M. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner @ (670)234-6866/9447.

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
P.O. BOX 500861 CK
SAIPAN, MP 96950
TEL: (670) 664-3200/1
FAX: (670) 664-3237
info@mymarianas.com
www.mymarianas.com
The Marianas

REGULAR BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority hereby gives notice that a **Regular Board of Directors Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, July 26, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.** at the **MVA Conference Room**.

MEETING AGENDA

1) **Preliminary Matters**
   a. Call to Order
   b. Roll Call
   c. Adoption of Agenda
   d. Adoption of Minutes
      i. June 28, 2023 Regular Board Meeting
2) **Public Comments**
3) **Committee Reports**
   a. Finance Committee
      i. Fund Status
      ii. Reprogramming of Funds
   b. AdHoc Committee Updates
      i. Japan
      ii. Korea
4) **Old Business**
   a. FY24 MVA Budget Submission
5) **New Business**
   a. Board Resolution: Banking Updates
6) **Executive Session**
7) **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
   a. Next Regular Board Meeting
   b. Others
8) **Adjournment**

/s/ Gloria Cavanagh
Acting Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

A rare look at Japan nuclear plant as it prepares to release radioactive water

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

This photo taken during a tour for The Associated Press shows a blue pipeline to transport seawater, part of the facility for the release of treated radioactive water to sea from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, operated by Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, also known as TEPCO, in Futaba town, northeastern Japan, Friday, July 14, 2023.

FUTABA, Japan (AP)—At Japan's tsunami-wrecked Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, giant blue pipes have been constructed to bring in torrents of seawater to dilute treated, radioactive water under a plan to discharge it gradually into the Pacific Ocean.

Workers were making final preparations as Associated Press journalists received a rare opportunity Friday to get a look at key equipment and facilities for the release, expected in coming weeks or months.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has looked at Japan's wastewater-release plan and said it would cause negligible radioactivity in the sea and no effect on neighboring countries. But the plans continue to draw strong protest and no starting date has been set.

Japan's fishing industry fears it will destroy the reputation of the country's seafood, and groups in South Korea and China also have raised concerns. Hong Kong announced Wednesday it would ban seafood imports from 10 Japanese prefectures once the release begins, and Beijing has threatened possible new restrictions on the Chinese mainland.

The blue pipelines at the coastal plant are designed to dilute treated water with hundreds of times the volume of seawater, in a primary pool. Later, the treated water from the tanks will be transported through a much thinner single pipeline after treatment, mixing and testing.

The diluted water will slowly be sent to a secondary pool before hitting a tunnel for a gradual, offshore release—over the span of decades—at an exit point 1 kilometer (1,000 yards) off the coast.

Workers are setting up a final water sampling station and testing two sets of equipment designed to shut down the system in emergencies—all part of the operation permit granted to the plan by nuclear safety inspectors.

The government and the operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, or TEPCO, have struggled to manage the massive amount of contaminated water coming from the reactors after they were damaged in a 2011 earthquake and tsunami. They say the plan to treat the water, dilute it with seawater and then release it into the Pacific Ocean will be much safer than national and international standards require.

TEPCO official Tomohiko Mayuzumi said that tritium, which government officials say is the only radionuclide inseparable from water, is being diluted to contain only 1/40 of the national safety standard and 1/7 of its level allowed by the World Health Organization for drinking water.

"Our plan is scientific and safe, and it is most important to firmly convey that and gain understanding," Mayuzumi said. Still, people have concerns and so a final decision on the timing of the release will be a "a political decision by the government," he said.

The massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and contaminating their cooling water, which has leaked continuously since then. The water is collected, treated with a filtering system and stored in about 1,000 tanks, which will reach their capacity in early 2024.

IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi, who was in Japan earlier this month to submit his agency's report to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and visit the plant, said the environmental and health impacts from the water release would be negligible under the plan. Radioactivity in the water would be almost undetectable and the impact wouldn't cross national borders, he said, adding that IAEA has opened an office at the Fukushima plant to stay there through the entire process of the water release, which will take decades.

But some scientists say the environmental impact from long term, low-dose exposures are still unknown, and others are calling for more transparency and greater access for cross-checks.

In Tokyo, Economy and Industry Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura met with national fishing association officials Friday to seek understanding of the fishing communities, saying the water release is an unavoidable step for the plant's daunting task of decommissioning three melted reactors.

During the talks, National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations chief Masanobu Sakamoto said their opposition is unchanged.

"We understand the scientific safety to a certain extent, but I believe scientific safety and sense of safety are different," Sakamoto told reporters after the meeting. "Safe and sustainable fishing with a sense of safety is our only hope. Unless we gain confidence about that, we will not ease our opposition."

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB23-DPL/
TIN-42300082-CIF TINIAN

SUBMISSION DATE: AUGUST 11, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS 'E' VEHICLE FOR TINIAN DISTRICT OFFICE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE DEPARMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS, MRS. TERESITA A. SANTOS VIA EMAIL AT dpl@dpl.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ TERESITA A. SANTOS
SECRETARY, DPL

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-23-022, Rev.1

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF FIVE (5) LIGHT-DUTY VEHICLES

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids to supply and deliver five (5) light-duty vehicles to Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to assist with the project management and inspections for the CUC Water and Wastewater systems upgrades and improvements.

This project is funded by a United States of Environment Protection Agency (USEPA) grant.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-IFB-23-022, Rev. 1 Supply and Delivery of Five (5) Light-Duty Vehicles"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on August 22, 2023** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before the submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing n**o later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on August 10, 2023,** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP NO.: DPW23-RFP No.: 42300084

SUBMISSION DATE: August 25, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Kagman Watershed Flood Protection and Irrigation Supply (KWP) Supplemental Watershed Plan-Environmental Document (SWP-ED)"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after July 24, 2023 at the Department of Public Works, Technical Services Division 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center. A non-refundable payment of One Hundred **Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on August 09, 2023, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Department of Land and Natural Resources Lower Base Office**, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on August 18, 2023 to **Mr. George C. Sablan, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ SYLVAN O. IGISOMAR
Secretary, DLNR

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 145

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Cut off travel for pregnant troops based in a state where abortion is banned? That's outrageous

In the military, service members don't have much control over where they live or travel. That means they could be stationed on a base in a state that essentially bans abortion and have no access to reproductive care when they need it.

That's why U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III last October directed all branches of the military to set up policies offering a pregnant service person administrative leave (separate from their regular leave) to obtain an abortion as well as travel and transportation allowances when reproductive health care is unavailable in the local area where the person is stationed. The new policies went into effect earlier this year. (Expense allowances are also available for people who must travel a far distance to get fertility treatments not covered by the military.)

Austin announced the changes several months after the Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to an abortion, noting in a memo that service members might be forced to travel greater distances and pay more out-of-pocket expenses for reproductive health care. Those conditions, he wrote in a memo, qualified as "unusual, extraordinary, hardship or emergency circumstances" that could make it difficult to recruit and retain a highly qualified force.

Now, just months after these policies went into effect, House Republicans want to undo the smart and sensible Defense Department policy offering travel expenses to service members who have no choice but to travel as far as out of state to access reproductive health care.

Last week, the House narrowly passed its version of the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, which includes an amendment from Rep. Ronny Jackson, R-Texas, halting the Pentagon policy paying for travel costs. In addition to declaring the policy part of the Biden administration's "radical and immoral pro-abortion agenda," Jackson argued that it violates the federal law—known as the Hyde Amendment—that prohibits the use of federal funds for abortion.

The cruelly unjust Hyde Amendment has been in place since 1977, depriving poor women of equal access to abortion. Among other things, it keeps federal dollars that fund Medicaid from being used to help poor people get abortion care. It's also the reason why pregnant service people can't get an abortion at a military hospital in any state—unless the person's health is endangered.

Jackson argues that federal dollars being spent on travel is the same as spending federal dollars on abortion.

That's absurd. Reimbursement for travel to get abortion care is not the same as covering the bill for the procedure. Service members still must pay out of pocket for the abortion. The Biden policy reasonably and legally allows a service member to travel off base—and be reimbursed—for an urgent health matter that cannot be resolved on base and can't even be resolved in the state where the base is located.

See CUT on Page 9

Seizing the moment for a more resilient Asia and the Pacific

Editor's Note: The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is convening top policymakers, experts and academicians from across the region on July 25-27 to discuss transformative adaptation policies and actions at ESCAP's Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction. The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023 will also be launched at the committee.

By ARMIDA SALSIAH ALISJAHBANA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana is the under-secretary-general of the United Nations and executive secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

The world faces a disaster emergency, yet nowhere is the threat more immediate than in Asia and the Pacific. Ours is a region where climate change-induced disasters are becoming more frequent and intense. Since 1970, two million people have lost their lives to disasters. Tragically, but all too predictably, the poorest in the least developed countries are worst affected. They will find themselves in the eye of the storm as temperatures rise, new disaster hot spots appear and existing risks increase. Unless we fundamentally change our approach to building resilience to disaster risk, temperature rises of 1.5°C or 2°C will make adaptation to the threat of disasters unfeasible. Disaster risk could soon outpace resilience in Asia and the Pacific.

It is worth pondering what this would mean. The grim tally of disaster-related deaths would inevitably rise, as would the annual cost of disaster-related losses, forecast to increase to almost $1 trillion, or 3% of regional GDP, under 2°C warming ¬ up from $924 billion today, or 2.9% of regional GDP. The deadly combination of disasters and extreme weather would undermine productivity and imperil sustainable development. In the poorest parts of our region, such as the Pacific small island developing states, disasters would become a major driver of inequality. Losses would be particularly devasting in the agriculture and energy sectors, disrupting food systems and undermining food security as well as jeopardizing energy supply and production. Environmental degradation and biodiversity loss would be remorseless, leading to climate change-driven extinctions and further increasing disaster risk.

To avoid this exponential growth of disaster risk, there is a narrow window of opportunity to increase resilience and protect hard-won development gains. To seize it, bold decisions are needed to deliver transformative adaption. They can no longer be postponed.

This week, countries meeting during our Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction will consider key questions such as prioritizing greater investment in early warning systems. Expanding coverage in least developed countries is the most effective way to reduce the number of people killed. Early warning systems can shield people living in multi-hazard hotspots and reduce disaster losses everywhere by up to 60%. They provide a tenfold return on investment. To protect food systems and reduce the exposure of the energy infrastructure—the backbone of our economies—sector-specific coverage is needed. Investments at the local level to improve communities' response to early warning alerts, delivered through expanded global satellite data use and embedded in comprehensive risk management policies, must all be part of our approach.

Nature-based solutions should be at the heart of adaptation strategies. They support the sustainable management, protection and restoration of degraded environments while reducing disaster risk. The evidence is unequivocal: preserving functional ecosystems in good ecological condition strengthens disaster risk reduction. This means preserving wetlands, flood plains and forests to guard against natural hazards, and mangroves and coral reefs to reduce coastal flooding. Forest restoration and sustainable agriculture are essential. In our urban centers, nature-based solutions can mitigate urban flooding and contribute to future urban resilience, including by reducing heat island effects.

Beyond these priorities, only transformative adaption can deliver the systemic change needed to leave no one behind in multi-hazard risk hot spots. Such change will cut across policy areas. It means aligning social protection and climate change interventions to enable poor and climate-vulnerable households to adapt and protect their assets and livelihoods. Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation must become complementary to make food and energy systems more resilient, particularly in disaster-prone arid areas and coastlines. Technologies, such as the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence, can improve the accuracy of real-time weather predictions and how disaster warnings are communicated.

Yet to make this happen, disaster risk financing needs to be dramatically increased and financing mechanisms scaled up. In a constrained fiscal context, we must remember that investments made upstream are far more cost-effective than spending after a disaster. The current level of adaptation finance falls well short of the $144.74 billion needed for transformative adaptation. We must tap innovative financing mechanisms to close the gap. Thematic bonds, debt for adaptation and ecosystem adaptation finance can help at-

See SEIZING on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

No fees for storage of rock crusher and conflict of interest disclosed

By AUBRY M. HOCOG
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Aubry M. Hocog is the mayor of the Municipality of Rota.

This is in response to the article that was published in the Marianas Variety on Monday, July 17, 2023, titled "Official: Rock crusher storage at Rota harbor should not cost government money." As mayor of Rota, I believe it is important to respond to all information that I believe is inaccurate. If asked directly, I would have gladly shared factual information regarding the status of the rock crusher equipment.

Background

Former Mayor Efraim Atalig sought the assistance of the Office of Grants Management to procure a rock crusher needed to produce construction materials such as sand and aggregate. OGM was awarded funds to procure the equipment, transport it to Rota and deliver it to an identified location on Rota. The container carrying the crusher equipment arrived on Rota on Dec. 5, 2023. When the equipment arrived, there were many copper wires attached and exposed. For safety purposes, the former mayor thought it was prudent to leave at the port where the equipment would allow for greater security.

As a result, the municipality sought the assistance of the Rota Transportation Terminal and entered into an agreement to waive all storage fees until the municipality can identify the location. Part of the transportation contract included the delivery and set up of the crushing equipment. Since there has been no identified location, the rock equipment continues to sit at the port site. Again, there are no fees associated with the storage of the rock crusher at its current location.

Bidding

Since I entered public office, I have tasked my staff to email and inquire information from the Division of Procurement Services regarding the bidding process on Rota for the rock crusher. We completed a bidding application and were told we needed to submit a letter identifying the requirements for the bid. We submitted a letter to the Procurement Office on Feb. 23 for the bidding process to avoid any potential impropriety. I received a letter from acting director Brien San Nicolas regarding the process and he provided guidance on how to proceed, especially after disclosing my relationship with the current vendor who has an operating quarry license.

Conflict of interest

I would like to point out that since the beginning of my inquiry regarding the rock crusher, I have disclosed information of my relationship to the current business vendor that has a quarry operating permit. I was then advised to recuse and withdraw myself as the expenditure authority from any dealings with the rock crusher. I was also advised that since public funds were not expensed, that the municipality could enter into a public private partnership, or PPP, pending approval of the contract by the Office of the Attorney General. This PPP agreement would allow a local vendor to operate the equipment and pay a royalty fee to the municipality to generate local funds to support our operation.

As a result of the letter given to my office, I submitted a letter addressed to the acting director of Procurement Services on May 18, 2023, as my statement of disqualification and appointed Jim Atalig, who currently serves as the chairman for the 19th Rota Municipal Council. Since then, chairman Atalig has been the one responsible to represent the municipality and the only one participating in any negotiations, correspondence regarding the rock crusher.

I hope this will clarify and make it known that all procurement policies and procedures have been followed. We live in a small community and ask that our people continue to work together toward helping build a productive Rota. I ask that our Rota leadership continue to communicate and collaborate with one another so that we can continue to work for the best interest and welfare of our people. I strongly believe we can build Rota to a standard that we can all be proud of that will safeguard our island for the benefit of our children and their future generation.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dr. John. B. Joyner: Educator, mentor, activist, and friend

Photo provided by his family shows Dr. John B. Joyner.

The passing of Dr. John Joyner has sent shockwaves throughout our community, as he touched the lives of so many in one way or another. His abilities as an educator are well-known, but it was his ability to inspire people that truly made him special, as I'm sure he was a mentor to many, myself included.

When I first arrived in the CNMI it was Dr. Joyner and attorney Joe Hill who introduced me to other African-Americans at the many functions and activities being conducted by African-Americans on holidays like Juneteenth. In fact, the last time Dr. Joyner and I were physically together was at the Juneteenth celebration that I sponsored in 2022, and he brought his famous gumbo.

Dr. Joyner was also an activist with a focus on the goals of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He participated in the civil rights movement and he continued to promote the inclusion and equal treatment for African-Americans in the CNMI.

Dr. Joyner was also a businessman with his famous "Hot-Dickey-Dog" snack-bar.

He was the only African-American to play a major role in our government, being appointed as a Cabinet member and he worked tirelessly with attorney Joe Hill to get the Martin Luther King Jr. Day recognized in the CNMI. Dr. Joyner and attorney Joe Hill had done most of the heavy lifting to get the law when I got involved to help get it over the finish line.

Dr. Joyner and attorney Joe Hill were really the leaders of the Black community in the CNMI for over two decades, sponsoring African-American activities and getting the NMI Humanities to sponsor events like the MLK Day events that brought in special guest speakers from the U.S. mainland and the parades that I used to lead when I was a teacher.

I lost a true and genuine friend with Dr. Joyner's passing, as he has always supported me and even cheered me on over the years. In fact, Dr. Joyner was the only person to go public to support me being a cannabis commissioner, which says a lot about his willingness to try and help people.

Dr. Joyner was always the "cool hand and head" when it came to dealing with the adversities that African-Americans faced in the CNMI.

I lost a true "counsel and friend" and the CNMI lost a great man for all seasons. May Dr. John B. Joyner rest in peace and we will all catch up to him "on the rebound," as we say in our culture. Prayers for you and family. RIP, Dr. Joyner, my friend!

Ambrose M. Bennet
Kagman III, Saipan

CUT

From Page 8

But the GOP is just using this bill to attack policies it derides as "woke." It also passed amendments to the bill blocking diversity initiatives and ending coverage of transition surgeries and hormone treatments for transgender troops.

Attacking the travel allowance is nothing more than grandstanding by opponents of abortion rights in the House. It's disrespectful to the women in the military who serve their country and often risk their lives. How dare a member of Congress stand in the way of the military trying to help a service person travel to get healthcare they need.

Let's hope this attempt to undo this policy will have little chance of making it into the final defense authorization bill. The Senate version of the bill, being debated this week, keeps the travel allowance policy in place. A House-Senate conference committee will have to resolve the differences between the two bills. It's imperative that the Senate and the Biden administration block the move to erase this policy. That's the least that the Pentagon can do for the health of its troops.

©2023 Los Angeles Times

SEIZING

From Page 8

tract private investment, reduce risk, and create new markets. These instruments should complement official development assistance, while digital technologies improve the efficiency, transparency and accessibility of adaptation financing.

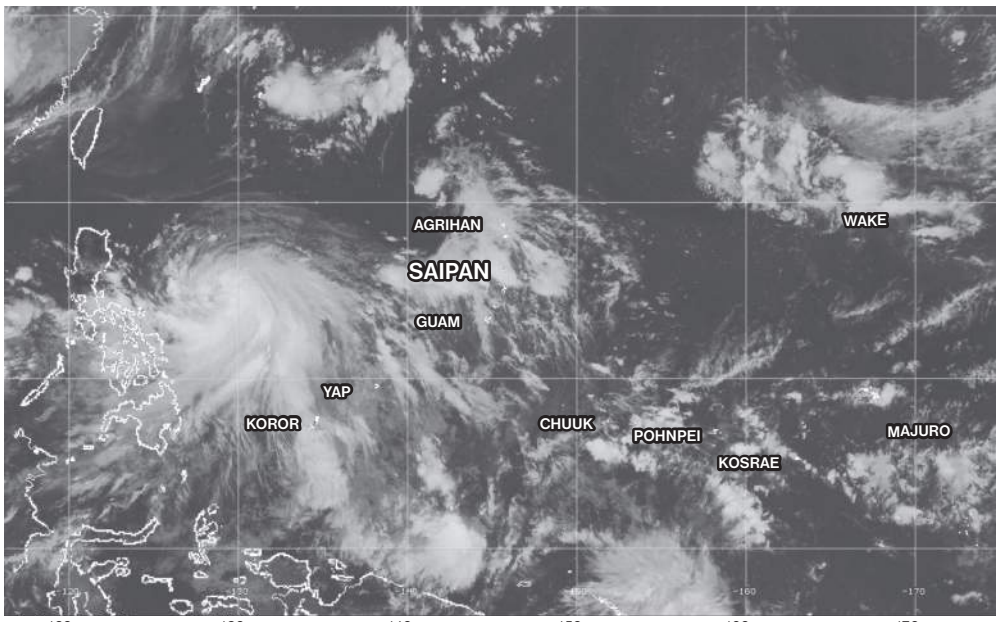
Now is the time to work together, to build on innovation and scientific breakthroughs to accelerate transformative adaptation across the region. A regional strategy that supports early warnings for all is needed to strengthen cooperation through the well-established United Nations mechanisms and in partnership with subregional intergovernmental organizations. At ESCAP, we stand ready to support this process every step of the way because sharing best practices and pooling resources can improve our region's collective resilience and response to climate-related hazards. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can only be achieved if we ensure disaster resilience is never outpaced by disaster risk. Let us seize the moment and protect our future in Asia and the Pacific.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly sunny	A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny	A 40 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Mostly cloudy
87° 80°	87° 80°	86° 79°	86° 79°	85° 80°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:34 AM, SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery and shows mostly cloudy skies with scattered showers through out the Marianas, and isolated thunderstorms in Guam waters. Ipan buoy has seas at 3 to 4 feet. Altimetry shows combined seas as 3 to 4 feet to the east of the Marianas and 4 to 6 feet to the far west. KBDI is at 321 and remains in moderate level.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	88° / 80°
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	83° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°
Pohnpei	Scattered Thunderstorms	88° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	88° / 78°
Majuro	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:57 AM	6:49 PM
Tuesday	5:57 AM	6:49 PM
Wednesday	5:57 AM	6:49 PM
Thursday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Friday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	10:51 AM	11:02 PM	-
Tuesday	11:38 AM	11:37 PM	-
Wednesday	12:28 PM	-	-
Thursday	-	12:16 AM	1:22 PM
Friday	-	12:59 AM	2:20 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	57° / 48°
Beijing	Showers	90° / 73°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	90° / 82°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	88° / 77°
London	Mostly Sunny	84° / 68°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	82° / 67°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Showers	55° / 45°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°
New York	Thunderstorms	86° / 71°
Osaka	Thunderstorms	88° / 77°
Paris	Sunny	95° / 73°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	82° / 73°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	90° / 66°
Salem	Thunderstorms	86° / 72°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	66° / 54°
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 73°
Tokyo	Showers	79° / 72°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	90° / 72°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
6:18 AM	Low Tide	1.04
11:19 AM	High Tide	1.65
5:49 PM	Low Tide	0.67
-	-	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 19, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	7:10AM	Daily up to July 20
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:45AM	8:45AM	1, 5 July 17 to Aug 18
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7 from July 21

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3468	8:20PM	1:50AM+1	Daily up to July 19
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	6, 4 July 23 to Aug 20
7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7 from July 20

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Camacho visit seeks to enhance Saipan-Japan relations

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho and Katori City Mayor Tomonori Ito tour Katori City and visit the Sawara Festival.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho poses with Katori City Mayor Tomonori Ito and the Saipan Awaodori Team at Katori City Hall.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho poses with the Tokyo Tensuiren Group and Saipan Awaodori Team.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho poses with High Priest Takeshi Katori of the Katori Jingu Shrine in Katori City.

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho recently paid a goodwill visit to Japan where he met with officials of the KSKK International Youth Association of Japan, Katori City, and the Katori Shrine. Camacho also met with the Tokyo Tensuiren Group which the Saipan Awaodori Team is under to show his support.

Camacho first met with KSKK director Hiroyuki Takada to talk about the upcoming student exchange program in July. The two officials also discussed arrangements for winter, spring, and summer exchange programs as well as allowing CNMI students to go to Japan in the fall. Both the mayor and director agreed to these arrangements as it allows students from the CNMI to travel to Japan and go through the full student exchange experience.

Camacho then met with Katori City officials, including Katori City Mayor Tomonori Ito. Among the items discussed were student and sports exchange programs to encourage more visits and bring in more Japanese visitors to Saipan. Farming techniques were also discussed as well, including programs such as sending professionals to Saipan to train CNMI youth. New farming techniques can be introduced to benefit local farmers and to teach valuable agricultural skills. The Saipan Awaodori Team also performed in front of 50 city hall staff and Katori middle school students who watched the performance virtually.

Camacho also met with members of the Katori Shrine group, including High Priest Takeshi Katori and chief of staff Shingo Katori. They discussed the upcoming Katori ceremony and Japanese Festival to be held at the Saipan Katori Shrine in Sugar King Park this Oct. 28. Special tour packages for the dignitaries were also prepared, with welcoming statements from Camacho, the Marianas Visitors Authority, and the president of the Japanese Society of the CNMI. The mayor believes that festivities and events such as these will help boost Saipan's popularity as a travel destination for Japanese tourists and allow the local community to become familiar with the Japanese culture and traditions.

The mayor also met with the Tokyo Tensuiren group, to which the Saipan Awaodori Team belongs to show his support for local performers. The mayor met with director Yukihiro Iwanami and councilor Osamu Shimizu. The Saipan Awaodori dancers did a one-hour performance that allowed them to show off their prowess and represent Saipan and the CNMI.

Camacho hopes to rekindle and cultivate the valuable relationship between the CNMI and Japan, which has long been a reliable tourism market for the CNMI, especially during the previous economic booms. Recent years have seen a major shift away from Japan and the mayor hopes to restart that market.

"In the post-pandemic world, Japanese tourism may help reinvigorate the island's faltering tourism industry. The mayor also recognizes the cultural and historical aspect of our long relationship with Japan, which dates back a century and will strive to maintain and continue that relationship to strengthen the bonds between our peoples and to preserve it for future generations," said a statement from Camacho's office. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23 – 089

Opening Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023
Closing Date: Tuesday, August 01, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	**Human Resources Technician**
DEPARTMENT:	**COA/ Human Resources**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$20,826.00 to $28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") is seeking for a qualified Human Resources Technician. Under the direct supervision of the Human Resources Manager or his/her designee the responsibilities will be as follows:

Duties:

- Provides administrative and technical support tasks for daily Human Resource operational functions;
- Provides administrative assistance with benefits, training, payroll and recruiting activities, information tracking and documentation.
- Receives, processes and verifies forms and completion of required information; enters and maintains Human Resource information systems data, files and records; maintains confidential personnel files and records.
- Assists employees and the public by providing information related to HR processes and procedures; retrieves and reviews data and resources to provide response to inquiries; or, refer inquiries or requests to appropriate resource.
- Performs research and verifies information; performs calculations; processes timekeeping information; compiles and maintains data for audit purposes.
- May process job vacancy announcements and assist in employment interview.
- Prepares forms and reports; drafts correspondence and templates; assists with gathering, documenting and maintaining information for programs, projects, training, recruitment, benefits or other areas.
- Assists management with special projects, information tracking and reporting.
- Monitors supply needs and prepare requests for replacement or acquisition; monitors equipment maintenance requirements and schedules services as required.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS and two (2) years of office/human resources related experience or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Customer service principles; Filing and recordkeeping principles; Mathematical concepts; Inventory and supplies maintenance practices; Modern office technology. Confidential practices in Human Resource or Legal work environment.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Filing, organizing, imaging and maintaining records and files; Preparing reports, correspondence and documentation; Managing time and prioritizing requests; Providing attention to detail; Proofreading documents and forms for accuracy and completion; Performing audits, identifying errors, making corrections and recommendations; Reviewing and researching database information; Responding to procedure and process information inquiries; Maintaining confidentiality of records and employment information; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Advanced understanding of basic office applications, including MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, etc.). Must have good communication skills and be capable of writing clear correspondences such as memorandums, letters, emails, etc. Must have proper phone and email etiquette.

- **Licensing:**
  - o Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
- **Physical Demands:**
  - o Occasionally required to lift and/or move up to 10 pounds and occasionally lift and/or move up to 20 pounds.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org.

P.O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 11925 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: info@cnmilicensing.gov.mp
Website: www.cnmilicensing.gov.mp

Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room, on Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

- **I.** Meeting Call to Order
- **II.** Determination of Quorum
- **III.** Review and Adoption of Agenda
- **IV.** Review and Adoption of Minutes (03/09/2023)
- **V.** Public Comments
- **VI.** Chairperson's Report
  - **A.** Welcoming of Member Board, Denn M. Manglona
  - **B.** Upcoming NCEES Annual Business Meeting
- **VII.** Director's Report
  - **A.** Financial Report
- **VIII.** Investigator's Report
- **IX.** Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
  - **A.** Governor's Office
  - **B.** Legislature
- **X.** Old Business
  - **A.** Notice of Certification for Adoption on Proposed Regulation for Real Estate Appraisal
- **XI.** New Business
- **XII.** Pending Applications for Board's Review
  - **A.** New Application
  - **B.** Renewal Applications
- **XIII.** Miscellaneous Business
- **XIV.** Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- **XV.** Announcements
  - **A.** Next Meeting Date
  - **B.** Adjournment of Meeting

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

(This ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

HOUSING TRUST FUND (HTF) PROGRAM

The National Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is a new affordable housing production program that will complement existing Federal, state and local efforts to increase and preserve the supply of decent, safe, and sanitary affordable housing for extremely low-income and very low-income households, including homeless families. The HTF was established under Title I of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, Section 1338 of the Federal Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and Soundness Act of 1992 (Public Law 110-289) and made possible through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

For the aforementioned program years, NMHC is soliciting for proposals from non-profit or for-profit entities to utilize the PY 2021 and PY 2022 allocations, for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of a housing unit to convert into a rental unit for a household with an area median income (AMI) of 30% or less.

The RFP packet is available on July 24, 2023, online at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Tab".

A mandatory pre-proposal meeting will be held on **Thursday, August 10, 2023, 10:00 am,** at the NMHC Main Office Conference Room located in Garapan, Saipan.

The proposals are due to NMHC on Friday, August 25, 2023, no later than 4:30 p.m.

Should you need any reasonable accommodations, please contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, at (670)234-6866/9447.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC)

Business

Different dining experiences at Hyatt Kili Café & Terrace

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Klli Café & Terrace is a top choice for al fresco dining on Saipan.

Known for serving dishes inspired by different cultures all over the world, Kili Café & Terrace offers a variety of dining experiences so that every visit is not the same. Aside from guests having the luxury to choose to dine-in or al fresco style, serving glorious food is also a top priority of the culinary team of Kili Café & Terrace.

Kili Cafe & Terrace starts the day with a daily breakfast buffet that aims to provide comfort food to help guests start the day right. Walk-ins are welcome to have a hefty first meal of the day or have morning meetings. Indulge in omelets, bacon, sausages, fried rice, croissants, waffles, pancakes, fresh cut fruits, juice drinks and more. Breakfast is open from 6:30am to 9:30am for only $26 with unlimited freshly brewed coffee, tea or iced tea.

TGIF Light Lunch Buffet is for the working crowd who wants to grab a quick bite during lunch hours. Serving light lunch that includes soup, salad, freshly baked bread, rice, two main courses selected by executive chef Matteo Fracalossi every week and delectable desserts. For only $25, you get a delicious and filling meal.

Marianas Grill/Barbecue Dinner Buffet is a go-to every Saturday night from 6pm to 9pm. This special night is known for its seafood and meat grill/barbecue variety filled with local island flavor. Guests also enjoy free flow of ice cold beer all for only $55.

Kili Café & Terrace also welcomes Sunday brunch goers from 11am to 2pm. Brunch buffet offers a mix of breakfast favorites and upscale entrées. Enjoy a variety of American, Chamorro, Asian and Italian dishes, and a carving station that is worth lining up for. The unlimited sparkling wine that guests sometimes create mimosas with is a favorite. All for only $60.

A la carte dining takes center stage starting lunch every Saturday from 11:30am to 2pm and a la carte dinner every Sunday, Monday and Tuesday from 6pm to 9pm. Hyatt favorites such as the Hyatt Signature Burger, Loco Moco, and many more await.

Kili Café & Terrace is also not only about delicious food, it is also about giving great customer service which gives guests a full dining experience.

For more information, go to saipan.regency.hyatt.com and press "Dining page" or call (670) 234-1234. Club At The Hyatt members enjoy a 25% discount every time they dine at Kili Café & Terrace.

A UPS strike could be just around the corner

NEW YORK (AP)—The clock is ticking. As the deadline to reach a new contract nears, a potential UPS strike feels closer than ever.

Negotiations broke down earlier this month and unionized workers have been holding rallies and practice pickets across the country. The Teamsters, which represent more than half of the company's workforce, will resume talks with UPS on Tuesday.

That leaves less than a week to come to an agreement before the current contract expires on Monday, July 31. The union has authorized a strike and Sean M. O'Brien, a fiery leader elected last year to lead the union, has vowed to do so if their demands aren't met.

"We're sending a message... all 340,000 of our members are united and ready to fight," O'Brien told The Associated Press at a practice picket Friday in Atlanta, where UPS is based.

UPS's unionized workers still seethe about a contract they feel was forced on them in 2018, and say that the company delivers millions more packages every day than it did just five years ago. The Teamsters are calling for better pay, particularly for part-time employees, and improved working conditions.

UPS has maintained that it already offers "industry-leading pay and benefits," but says it's prepared to increase that compensation. In a Friday update, the company said it aimed "quickly to finalize a fair deal that provides certainty for our customers, our employees and businesses across the country."

If negotiations are unsuccessful the deliveries that Americans have come to rely on, particularly since the pandemic began in 2020, could be vastly disrupted. Such an impasse hasn't been seen since 1997, well before delivery of everyday items from dog food to prescription drugs became the norm, when a walkout by 185,000 workers crippled UPS. Here's what you need to know.

WHAT ARE THE TEAMSTERS ASKING FOR?

Much on the union's demands comes down to better pay and improved working conditions.

Annual profits at UPS in the past two years are close to three times what they were before the pandemic. The company returned about $8.6 billion to shareholders in the form of dividends and stock buybacks in 2022, and forecast another $8.4 billion for shareholders this year.

The Teamsters say frontline UPS workers deserve some of that windfall. A sticking point in negotiations has been wage increases for part-time workers, who make a minimum of $16.20 an hour.

Nation

Till monument to be built

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden will establish a national monument honoring Emmett Till, the Black teenager from Chicago who was abducted, tortured and killed in 1955 after he was accused of whistling at a white woman in Mississippi, and his mother, a White House official said Saturday.

Biden will sign a proclamation on Tuesday to create the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument across three sites in Illinois and Mississippi, according to the official. The individual spoke on condition of anonymity because the White House had not formally announced the president's plans.

Tuesday is the anniversary of Emmett Till's birth in 1941.

The monument will protect places that are central to the story of Till's life and death at age 14, the acquittal of his white killers and his mother's activism. Till's mother's insistence on an open casket to show the world how her son had been brutalized and Jet's magazine's decision to publish photos of his mutilated body helped galvanize the Civil Rights Movement.

Biden's decision also comes at a fraught time in the United States over matters concerning race. Conservative leaders are pushing back against the teaching of slavery and Black history in public schools, as well as the incorporation of diversity, equity and inclusion programs from college classrooms to corporate boardrooms.

On Friday, Vice President Kamala Harris criticized a revised Black history curriculum in Florida that includes teaching that enslaved people benefited from the skills they learned at the hands of the people who denied them freedom. The Florida Board of Education approved the curriculum to satisfy legislation signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican presidential candidate who has accused public schools of liberal indoctrination.

"How is it that anyone could suggest that in the midst of these atrocities that there was any benefit to being subjected to this level of dehumanization?" Harris asked in a speech delivered from Jacksonville, Florida.

DeSantis said he had no role in devising his state's new education standards but defended the components on how enslaved people benefited.

"All of that is rooted in whatever is factual," he said in response.

The monument to Till and his mother will include three sites in the two states.

The Illinois site is Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ in Bronzeville, a historically Black neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. Thousands of people gathered at the church to mourn Emmett Till in September 1955.

The Mississippi locations are Graball Landing, believed to be where Till's mutilated body was pulled from the Tallahatchie River, and the Tallahatchie County Second District Courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi, where Till's killers were tried and acquitted by an all-white jury.

Till was visiting relatives in Mississippi when Carolyn Bryant Donham said the 14-year-old Till whistled and made sexual advances at her while she worked in a store in the small community of Money.

ACROSS THE NATION

Family expresses gratitude after body believed to be missing girl found

WASHINGTON CROSSING, Pa. (AP)—The family of a 2-year-old girl swept away along with another child by a flash flood that engulfed their vehicle on a Pennsylvania road is expressing gratitude at the discovery of a body believed to be hers. The body was found early Friday evening in the Delaware River near a Philadelphia wastewater treatment plant about 30 miles (50 kilometers) from where Matilda Sheils was carried away, authorities said Friday night. The Philadelphia medical examiner's office plans an autopsy. The search continues for Matilda's 9-month-old brother, Conrad. "We are grateful that our little Mattie has been brought home to us. We are still praying for the return of Conrad," the family said in a statement posted Saturday by Upper Makefield Township police.

Dive team deployed after helicopter crashes into Alaska lake

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A rescue and recovery dive team was deployed Saturday after a helicopter with a pilot and three state workers crashed in a large lake on Alaska's North Slope, officials said. No survivors have been located. "The official word is, they are missing, presumed fatal," said Clint Johnson, the chief of the National Transportation Safety Board's Alaska region. An NTSB investigator was also en route to the accident scene Saturday as plans were being made to recover the wreckage from the water, he said. Challenges with the lake crash site and the availability of another helicopter in the area likely mean the aircraft won't be raised from the middle of the shallow, 1-mile-wide (1.6-kilometer-wide) lake until Monday or Tuesday, Johnson said. The downed helicopter had been chartered by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the department said in a statement Friday. It was carrying three employees from the Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey who had been conducting field work.

Train derailment in northern Montana spills freight

HAVRE, Mont. (AP)—A train derailment in northern Montana spilled freight and left cars tangled up along a major east-west railroad corridor but caused no injuries. The accident comes less than a month after a railroad bridge collapse in southern Montana sent tanks cars with oil products plunging into the Yellowstone River, spilling molten sulfur and up to 250 tons of hot asphalt. The latest accident involved a BNSF Railway traveling Friday at 5:39 p.m. near the Milk River east of the small town of Havre. Eleven cars derailed and the cause was under investigation, said BNSF spokesperson Lena Kent. Cleanup and repair work continued Saturday as the line was reopened to service. One car hauling hazardous materials—paint thinner—derailed but did not spill, said Amanda Frickel with Hill County Disaster and Emergency Services. Cars carrying cake mix, napkins, carrots and other consumer goods broke open and spilled, she said. Some of the derailed cars carried shipping containers stacked in pairs, and officials initially estimated more than two dozen cars were involved.

Asia

AS TAIWAN PREPARES FOR ANTI-INVASION EXERCISE

China sends dozens of warplanes

AP

Ten jet fighters perform in formation to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army Air Force in Beijing, China, Nov. 15, 2009.

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—China sent dozens of warplanes, including fighter jets and bombers, toward Taiwan, the island's Defense Ministry said Saturday, marking a forceful display days before the democracy plans to hold military exercises aimed at defending itself against a possible invasion.

Taiwan is due to hold its annual Han Kuang exercise next week, during which its military will hold combat readiness drills for preventing an invasion. It will also conduct the annual Wan'an exercises aimed at preparing civilians for natural disasters and practicing evacuations in case of an air raid.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army sent 37 aircraft and seven navy vessels around Taiwan between 6 a.m. Friday and 6 a.m. Saturday, the ministry said in a statement. Among them were J-10 and J-16 fighters and H-6 bombers, and 22 of the detected warplanes crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait — an unofficial boundary that had been considered a buffer between the island and mainland — or entered Taiwan's air defense identification zone near its southern part, the statement said.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 following a civil war that ended with the ruling Communist Party in control of the mainland. The island has never been part of the People's Republic of China, but Beijing says it must unite with the mainland.

In recent years, China has shown displeasure at political activities in Taiwan by stepping up the number of military planes sent toward the island.

China held huge military drills in response to former United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August. It fired missiles over the island in a significant escalation that disrupted trade lanes in the Taiwan Strait and forced airplanes to reroute flights.

In April, the PLA also held large-scale combat readiness drills in the air and sea around the island in response to Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen meeting with current U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

N. Korea fires cruise missiles; stays mum on missing US soldier

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea fired several cruise missiles toward its western sea Saturday, South Korea's military said, marking the second launch event this week, apparently in protest of the docking of a nuclear-armed U.S. submarine in South Korea.

While adding to its barrage of missile launches in recent months, North Korea remained publicly silent for a fifth day on the fate of an American soldier who bolted into the North across the heavily armed Korean border this week.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launches were detected beginning around 4 a.m. but did not immediately report how many missiles were fired or how far they flew. It said the United States and South Korean militaries were closely analyzing the launches.

North Korea in recent years has been testing newly developed cruise missiles it describes as "strategic," implying an intent to arm them with nuclear weapons. Experts say the main mission of those weapons would include striking naval assets and ports. Designed to fly like small airplanes and travel along landscape that would make them harder to detect by radar, cruise missiles are among a growing collection of North Korean weapons aimed at overwhelming missile defenses in the South.

On Wednesday, North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles from an area near its capital, Pyongyang. They flew about 550 kilometers (340 miles) before landing in waters east of the Korean Peninsula.

The flight distance of those missiles roughly matched the distance between Pyongyang and the South Korean port city of Busan, where the USS Kentucky on Tuesday made the first visit by a U.S. nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea since the 1980s.

Also Tuesday, American soldier Pvt. Travis King sprinted across the border into North Korea while on a tour of an inter-Korean truce village.

North Korea's state media has yet to comment on King and the country has not responded to U.S. requests to clarify where he is being kept and what his condition is. U.S. officials have expressed concern about King's well-being, considering North Korea's previous rough treatment of some American detainees. It could be weeks, or even months, before North Korea releases meaningful information about King, analysts say, as the country could drag out his detention to maximize leverage and add urgency to U.S. efforts to secure his release.

World

DESPITE RUSSIAN ATTACKS

Ukraine pushes grain exports

LONDON (AP)—Russia has repeatedly fired missiles and drones at Ukrainian ports key to sending grain to the world. Moscow has declared large swaths of the Black Sea dangerous for shipping. Even the U.S. said ships are at risk of being targeted.

There is still interest from ship owners in carrying Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea—if they can mitigate the risk, according to a major shipping group. And that's a big if.

Despite the warnings and port attacks, which have leveled grain infrastructure, "shipping has always been very, very resilient in the face of these sorts of risks," said John Stawpert, senior manager of environment and trade for the International Chamber of Shipping, which represents 80% of the world's commercial fleet.

This week's strikes came after Russia pulled out of a wartime accord that the U.N. and Turkey brokered last year to provide safeguards for shipping companies in a bid to end a global food crisis. Ukraine — which, along with Russia, is a major supplier of wheat, barley and vegetable oil to developing nations — shipped 32.9 million metric tons of grain to the world and supplied 80% of the World Food Program's wheat for humanitarian aid so far this year.

Following the grain deal's collapse, Ukraine sent a letter to the U.N. International Maritime Organization establishing its own temporary shipping corridor, saying it would "provide guarantees of compensation for damage."

But Russia warned this week that ships traversing parts of the Black Sea would assume to be carrying weapons to Ukraine. In a seeming tit-for-tat move, Ukraine said vessels heading to Russian Black Sea ports would be considered "carrying military cargo with all the associated risks."

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin said Friday that the navy will check vessels to ensure they are not carrying weapons before taking other action.

Continued shipments from Ukraine will depend on vessels getting insurance for potential damage or injuries and deaths to crew members and how the safety risks play out. Ships that were exporting Ukrainian grain can be worth tens of millions of dollars, have 20 to 22 sailors on board and carry food also worth tens of millions, according to Jayendu Krishna, deputy head of maritime advisers at Drewry, a maritime research consultancy.

All ships go through threat assessments to allow crews to protect against problems before setting sail, which have grown in importance as ships deal with piracy, terrorism and war zones.

For the Black Sea, the risks for ships would be: explosive mines, becoming collateral damage at ports or being targeted themselves, which Stawpert said would be "a huge escalation."

"The million-dollar question is whether the threats to merchant shipping are serious and whether they'll be followed through. And there's no firm way of knowing that until it actually happens," Stawpert said, adding that he has not yet heard from insurers.

With Russia's warnings, "it is unlikely that underwriters will want to cover that risk," said the International Union of Marine Insurance, which represents national and international marine insurers.

The group thought it was unlikely owners would put their ships and crews in danger, echoed by Munro Anderson, head of operations for Vessel Protect, which assesses war risks at sea and provides insurance with backing from Lloyd's, whose members make up the world's largest insurance marketplace.

He didn't directly speak to whether underwriting businesses like his would take on the risk but said without protections for ships like they had under the grain deal, "safety conditions cannot be guaranteed."

Krishna said the only way to mitigate risk was through insurance from the 12 providers making up the International Group of P&I Clubs, which offers liability coverage for about 90% of the world's cargo shipped by sea, according to its website.

"P&I clubs will be wary of even insuring" without a guarantee from the U.N. or some other body, he said.

Netanyahu taken to hospital for heart procedure, is placed under sedation

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said early Sunday he was going to the hospital for an emergency procedure to receive a pacemaker, but vowed to press ahead with his controversial judicial overhaul plan.

In a brief videotaped statement released at 2 a.m., Netanyahu said he had been fitted with a monitoring device after being briefly hospitalized last week for what his office had said was dehydration. He said an alarm on the device beeped Saturday night, meaning he needed a pacemaker immediately.

"I feel excellent, but I listen to my doctors," he said.

In a short statement, Netanyahu's office said Israel's leader would be placed under sedation. A top deputy, Justice Minister Yariv Levin, was to stand in for him.

Netanyahu's office made the announcement as Israel faces widespread street protests over Netanyahu's contentious judicial overhaul plan. The plan has triggered months of protests, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets Saturday night to demonstrate against it ahead of a key parliament vote Monday.

Levin is the mastermind of the overhaul plan.

Netanyahu's office said the prime minister would receive the pacemaker at Israel's Sheba Hospital, where he was treated last week as well.

Netanyahu said he expected to be released from the hospital on Sunday and head to the Knesset, or parliament, ahead of the expected vote on his overhaul.

At the same time, he said he hoped to reach an agreement with his opponents.

A pacemaker is used when a patient's heart is beating too slowly, which can cause fainting spells, according to the National Institutes of Health. It can also be used to treat heart failure. By sending electrical pulses to the heart, the device increases or maintains a person's heartbeat at a normal rhythm, allowing the heart to pump blood to the body at a normal rate. ***(AP)***

Health & Wellness

Work with your hands? Watch out for carpal tunnel syndrome

By CYNTHIA WEISS
Mayo Clinic News Network

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I'm a homebuilder and have begun experiencing numbness and tingling in my hands. Sometimes I drop things because I can't get a good grip. A friend suggested I might have carpal tunnel syndrome. But doesn't that mostly affect people who use computers all day? Can you explain more about the condition?

ANSWER: Working with your hands day after day can take a toll on them, causing pain, numbness and weakness. Carpal tunnel syndrome is one condition that can affect many types of occupations, including farmers, truck drivers, factory and construction workers, and others.

Carpal tunnel is a condition caused by compression of the median nerve located in the wrist. This nerve provides feeling to the thumb and the index, middle and part of the ring fingers, and also sends signals to the muscles around the base of the thumb.

Some causes of carpal tunnel syndrome include medical conditions such as arthritis, gout, diabetes, amyloidosis, infections, masses and severe wrist injuries. Other causes are environmental or workplace conditions that involve forceful and repetitive gripping, and using heavy machinery and vibrating manual tools.

The symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome include:

- Numbness and tingling in the fingers
- Swelling and discomfort of the hands and fingers
- Weakness, especially when pinching and gripping
- Dropping things
- Waking up at night to shake out the hands
- Numbness of the fingers first thing in the morning

DREAMSTIME

Working with your hands day after day can take a toll on them, causing pain, numbness and weakness.

Diagnosing carpal tunnel syndrome

To determine if you have carpal tunnel syndrome, an orthopedic specialist will discuss the history of your symptoms and perform a physical examination of your hands and wrists.

Other tests may be performed or requested, including:

- Two-point discrimination test on your fingertips to identify which fingers have decreased sensation
- Tinel's test, which is conducted by tapping the nerve in the carpal tunnel at the wrist to see if it causes tingling in your fingers
- Durkan's test, which involves pressing a thumb over the nerve in the carpal tunnel at the wrist to see if the numbness or tingling gets worse
- X-rays of your affected hand

Treating the condition

Treatment strategies are divided into nonsurgical and surgical measures.

Nonsurgical treatments include wearing a wrist brace during the night and undergoing cortisone injections.

Surgical intervention for carpal tunnel syndrome is a carpal tunnel release. The roof of the carpal tunnel is divided, which relieves pressure on the median nerve. Surgery may be open or endoscopic.

Both open and endoscopic surgery are outpatient procedures. Endoscopic surgery is minimally invasive. It's performed in an operating room with or without light sedation. After medication is injected to numb the palm and wrist, a small incision is made near the wrist. A tiny camera is inserted through the incision into the carpal tunnel. The surgeon inspects the tunnel and then uses a blade attached to the camera to cut the transverse carpal ligament—the roof of the tunnel—to relieve nerve compression.

For the best results after surgery, be sure to consult an orthopedic hand surgeon while numbness and tingling are still intermittent rather than constant.

Preventing carpal tunnel syndrome

There are no proven strategies to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome, but you can minimize stress on the hands and wrists by:

- **Reducing your force and relaxing your grip.** If your work involves a cash register or keyboard, for instance, hit the keys softly.
- **Taking short, frequent breaks.** Gently stretch and bend hands and wrists periodically. Alternate tasks when possible. This is especially important if you use equipment that vibrates or requires you to exert a great amount of force. Even a few minutes each hour can make a difference.
- **Watching your form.** Avoid bending your wrist all the way up or down. A relaxed middle position is best.
- **Improving your posture.** Incorrect posture rolls shoulders forward, shortening the neck and shoulder muscles and compressing nerves in the neck. This can affect the wrists, fingers and hands, and can cause neck pain.
- **Keeping your hands warm.** You're more likely to develop hand pain and stiffness if you work in a cold environment. If you can't control the temperature at work, put on fingerless gloves that keep the hands and wrists warm.

If you're experiencing symptoms, consult with an orthopedic specialist to determine the best treatment to keep you on the job or get you back to work.—*Dr. Kristin Karim, Orthopedic Surgery, Mayo Clinic, Albert Lea and Austin, Minnesota*

Healthy Living

When licorice is bad for you

Some black licorice, easily identified by its sharp taste, contains harmful ammonium chloride, or sal-ammoniac.

Side effects

If you eat large amounts of licorice containing more than 5 percent sal-ammoniac ...

Bones lose calcium Sal-ammoniac changes acidity of blood, causing bones to release calcium to correct the acid imbalance

Blood pressure rises Glycyrrhetinic acid in licorice interferes with hormones that help regulate blood pressure

Source: Danish Center for Human Nutrition, TNS Photo Service

When and how you eat matters

ON NUTRITION

BY BARBARA INTERMILL
Tribune News Service

Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. She is the author of Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating. *Email her at barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.*

Reader Barb A. writes, "Thank you for the article you wrote about how it's not just about what you eat, but when you eat it. I am 69 and had been slowly gaining weight the last few years. I struggled. I only ate two small to average meals a day, but continued to gain weight. I would eat brunch and dinner. After reading your column I started eating breakfast and "dinch," an early dinner/late lunch before 3. I have lost 20 pounds. I couldn't have done it without you."

Wow, Barb! That's impressive. I'd say you did it very well without me!

Karen, who reads the column in The Daily News in Longview, Washington, asks, "Does the amount of chewing or the degree to which food is chewed before swallowing have an effect on the nutritional benefits? Fiber? Calories? Vitamins?"

Good question, Karen. Chewing our food is a vital first step in the digestion process. And scientists tell us chewing is actually a pretty complex process. According to a 2022 article on the topic published in Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition, not only does the act of chewing make food easier to swallow, it also aids in the digestion and absorption of vital nutrients.

DREAMSTIME

Chewing our food is a vital first step in the digestion process.

Think about it. A well-chewed bite of food offers more surface area to the digestive enzymes in our mouths and all the way down our digestive tracts. The better a food is broken down into tiny particles, the more easily its nutrients can be absorbed into our bodies.

When we literally bite off more than we can chew, we swallow fragments of food that are too large to be digested completely. This can lead to indigestion, bloating and constipation, according to this article.

As for dietary fiber, these undigested components of plant foods are extremely important to the health and happiness of our gut microbiome—the myriad of good bacteria in our digestive tracts that fight off pathogens and enhance our ability to use nutrients.

High-fiber foods such as fruits and vegetables also tend to be rich in nutritional value. Yet they may be difficult for some people to chew. If one avoids these foods because of chewing problems, they can miss key nutrients in their diets.

While chewing food does not magically make calories disappear (darn), it may help keep us from overeating, researchers say. That's because when we take the time to chew our food thoroughly, it takes us longer to eat. And that gives our stomach time to tell our brain we are no longer hungry. Result? We may actually start to feel satisfied with less food.

Some research has even found that the more you chew your food, the less ghrelin—a hormone that stimulates your appetite—you produce. Sweet!

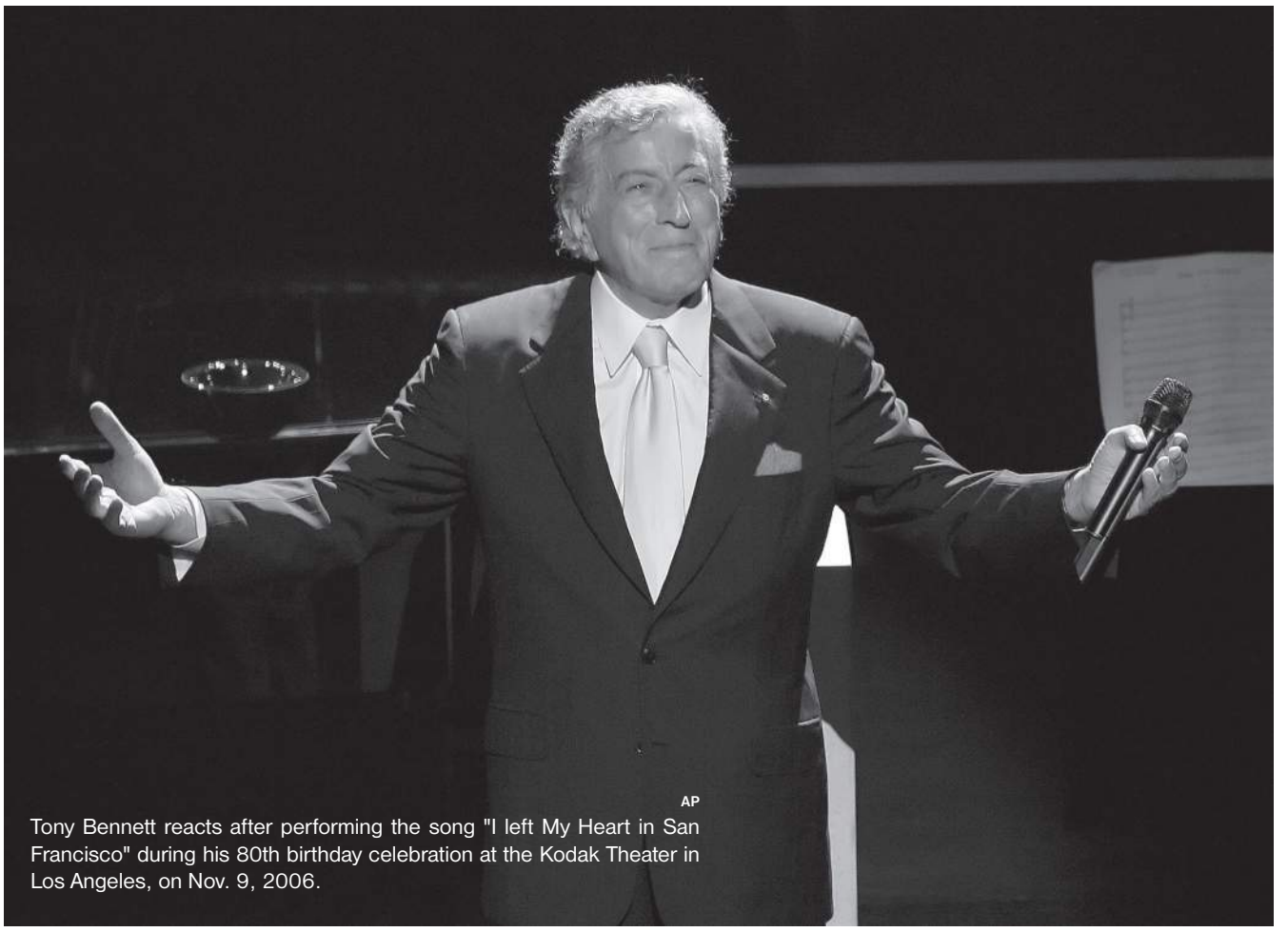
Life & Style

Tony Bennett, masterful stylist of musical standards, dies at 96

NEW YORK (AP)—Tony Bennett, the eminent and timeless stylist whose devotion to classic American songs and knack for creating new standards such as "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" graced a decadeslong career that brought him admirers from Frank Sinatra to Lady Gaga, died Friday. He was 96, just two weeks short of his birthday.

Publicist Sylvia Weiner confirmed Bennett's death to The Associated Press, saying he died in his hometown of New York. There was no specific cause, but Bennett had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2016.

The last of the great saloon singers of the mid-20th century, Bennett often said his lifelong ambition was to create "a hit catalog rather than hit records." He released more than 70 albums, bringing him 19 competitive Grammys—all but two after he reached his 60s—and enjoyed deep and lasting affection from fans and fellow artists.



AP

Tony Bennett reacts after performing the song "I left My Heart in San Francisco" during his 80th birthday celebration at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles, on Nov. 9, 2006.

Bennett didn't tell his own story when performing; he let the music speak instead—the Gershwins and Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern. Unlike his friend and mentor Sinatra, he would interpret a song rather than embody it. If his singing and public life lacked the high drama of Sinatra's, Bennett appealed with an easy, courtly manner and an uncommonly rich and durable voice—"A tenor who sings like a baritone," he called himself—that made him a master of caressing a ballad or brightening an up-tempo number.

"I enjoy entertaining the audience, making them forget their problems," he told The Associated Press in 2006. "I think people ... are touched if they hear something that's sincere and honest and maybe has a little sense of humor. ... I just like to make people feel good when I perform."

Bennett was praised often by his peers, but never more meaningfully than by what Sinatra said in a 1965 Life magazine interview: "For my money, Tony Bennett is the best singer in the business. He excites me when I watch him. He moves me. He's the singer who gets across what the composer has in mind, and probably a little more."

He not only survived the rise of rock music but endured so long and so well that he gained new fans and collaborators, some young enough to be his grandchildren. In 2014, at age 88, Bennett broke his own record as the oldest living performer with a No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 chart for "Cheek to Cheek," his duets project with Lady Gaga. Three years earlier, he topped the charts with "Duets II," featuring such contemporary stars as Gaga, Carrie Underwood and Amy Winehouse, in her last studio recording. His rapport with Winehouse was captured in the Oscar-nominated documentary "Amy," which showed Bennett patiently encouraging the insecure young singer through a performance of "Body and Soul."

His final album, the 2021 release "Love for Sale," featured duets with Lady Gaga on the title track, "Night and Day" and other Porter songs.

For Bennett, one of the few performers to move easily between pop and jazz, such collaborations were part of his crusade to expose new audiences to what he called the Great American Songbook.

"No country has given the world such great music," Bennett said in a 2015 interview with Downbeat Magazine. "Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern. Those songs will never die."

Ironically, his most famous contribution came through two unknowns, George Cory and Douglass Cross, who in the early '60s provided Bennett with his signature song at a time his career was in a lull. They gave Bennett's musical director, pianist Ralph Sharon, some sheet music that he stuck in a dresser drawer and forgot about until he was packing for a tour that included a stop in San Francisco.

"Ralph saw some sheet music in his shirt drawer ... and on top of the pile was a song called 'I Left My Heart In San Francisco.' Ralph thought it would be good material for San Francisco," Bennett said. "We were rehearsing and the bartender in the club in Little Rock, Arkansas, said, 'If you record that song, I'm going to be the first to buy it.'"

Released in 1962 as the B-side of the single "Once Upon a Time," the reflective ballad became a grassroots phenomenon staying on the charts for more than two years and earning Bennett his first two Grammys, including record of the year.

By his early 40s, he was seemingly out of fashion. But after turning 60, an age when even the most popular artists often settle for just pleasing their older fans, Bennett and his son and manager, Danny, found creative ways to market the singer to the MTV Generation. He made guest appearances on "Late Night with David Letterman" and became a celebrity guest artist on "The Simpsons." He wore a black T-shirt and sunglasses as a presenter with the Red Hot Chili Peppers at the 1993 MTV Music Video Awards, and his own video of "Steppin' Out With My Baby" from his Grammy-winning Fred Astaire tribute album ended up on MTV's hip "Buzz Bin."

That led to an offer in 1994 to do an episode of "MTV Unplugged" with special guests Elvis Costello and k.d. lang. The evening's performance resulted in the album, "Tony Bennett: MTV Unplugged," which won two Grammys, including album of the year.

Pickleball partnership may be too much of a good thing

DEAR ABBY: I play pickleball with a nice group of people. Partners normally split after each game. One day, however, a woman told me I was her favorite partner. From that day on, she played with me as often as possible, even though she could have chosen partners who were better players than me, and won more games.

Abby, she is the most attractive woman I have ever met, and not just physically—she's smart, friendly, athletic, caring, supportive and really fun to play with. I'm not used to having women like her pay attention to me, and it feels great. She's married, but I can't help having a crush on her, a feeling I'm pretty sure is not mutual—and therefore not appropriate -- yet I think about her all the time.

How can I get over this feeling? Should I tell her I have a crush on her, which would probably drive her away? Should I quit being her partner? Or should I just keep everything the same and hope the attraction gradually fades? I love playing with her, and I don't want to stop.

BIG CRUSH IN NEW YORK

DEAR CRUSH: What if you tell this woman you have a crush on her and she responds by telling you she also has a crush on you? Where would that lead? She's married. Clearly, there is a mutual attraction, and it isn't based on how well you play the game of pickleball. Maybe you are easy to be around, or she likes your sense of humor.

Your crush may or may not fade with time. Because you enjoy the contact you have with her, continue being her partner unless it progresses to something that makes either of you uncomfortable. (Or too comfortable.)

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I've been in a relationship for nearly 20 years. We are not married. For three-fourths of this relationship, I have been the one who pays for everything (with my disability check). He refuses to look for a job. When I told him a few years back that I wasn't happy, his only reaction before leaving the room was to ask, "Do you love me?"

Every time I mention the bills or his getting a job I'm met with excuses. We had talked about moving, because I had received an inheritance. Now it's as if his ideas for a home are more important than mine, plus I'm still expected to pay for it all.

I want out, but he has a lot of stuff—and I mean A LOT—and nowhere to go. I feel guilty. I know I have let it happen and have tolerated it, but if I say anything, he acts like a 5-year-old having a tantrum. He's very negative and mocks anything I try to do to improve myself. Please tell me what to do.

LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT

DEAR LOOKING: When your freeloader asked "Do you love me?", you should have responded with, "Do you love ME? Because if you do you would find a job and help with the finances." Sponging off a lonely woman isn't love. It's extortion. If you really want to improve yourself, give him a date to get himself and his stuff out of there and stick to it.

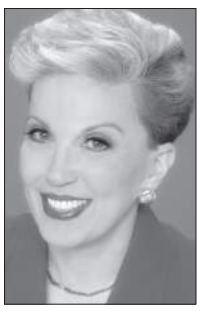
Warning: You may need to consult an attorney so you know your options because his tantrums, rather than being a sign of love, appear to be an attempt to bully you into letting him continue to take advantage.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

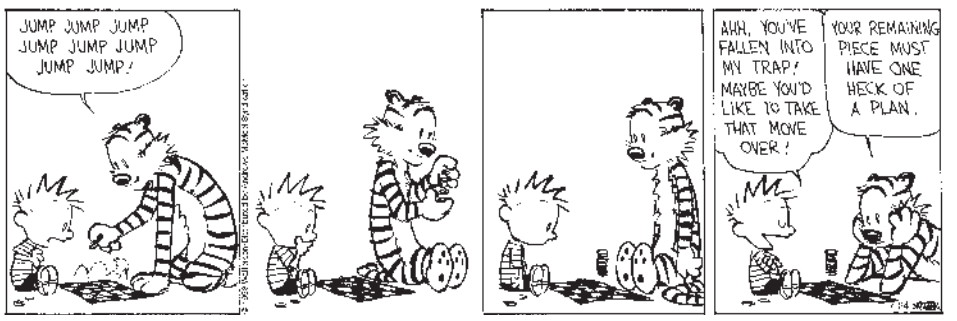


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

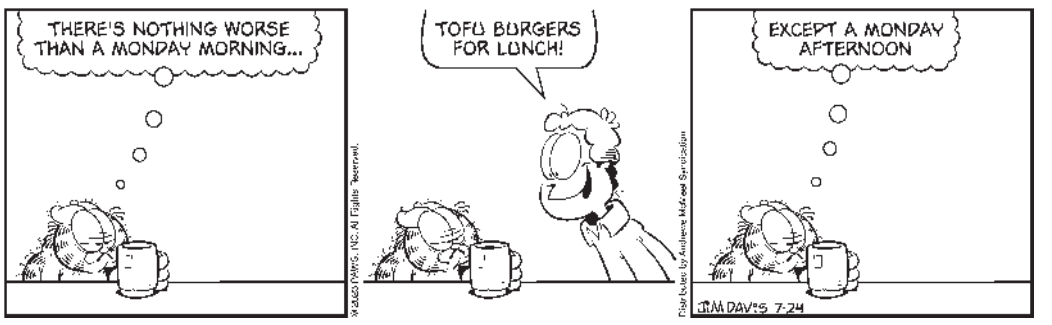
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


JUMP JUMP JUMP JUMP JUMP JUMP JUMP JUMP!
AHH, YOU'VE FALLEN INTO MY TRAP! MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO TAKE THAT MOVE OVER!
YOUR REMAINING PIECE MUST HAVE ONE HECK OF A PLAN.

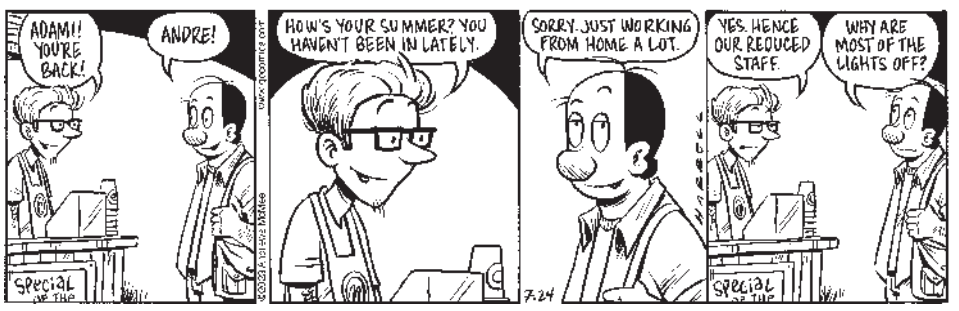
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ADAM!! YOU'RE BACK!
ANDRE!
HOW'S YOUR SUMMER? YOU HAVEN'T BEEN IN LATELY.
SORRY. JUST WORKING FROM HOME A LOT.
YES. HENCE OUR REDUCED STAFF.
WHY ARE MOST OF THE LIGHTS OFF?
7-24

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

YOU SHOULD REBEL AGAINST YOUR PARENTS AND DATE A BAD BOY LIKE ME.
AND JUST WHAT MAKES YOU A BAD BOY?
WHEN YOU WERE IN THE LADIES' ROOM, I TOLD THE BARTENDER TO PUT MY BEER ON YOUR TAB.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

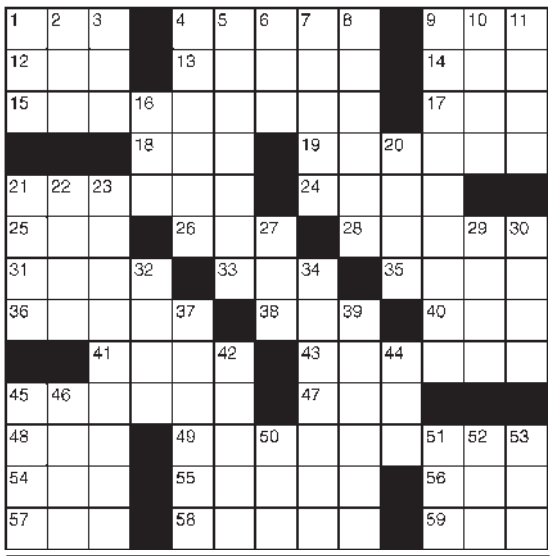
ACROSS
1 Shred
4 Surgery reminders
9 Watch chain
12 Green prefix
13 Trig ratio
14 Commotion
15 Good poker hand
17 Roulette bet
18 Moray, for one
19 Crosses a threshold
21 Malign
24 TV/radio host John
25 Simile part
26 Goof up
28 Volleyball putaway
31 Hardly hirsute
33 Bottom line
35 Lose traction
36 Writer Sontag
38 Showbiz job
40 Paris summer
41 Ancient Dead Sea land
43 Untie
45 Odorless gas
47 Wall St. debut
48 Piccadilly privy
49 "This Kiss" singer
54 Tourist's aid
55 "Glee" guitarist
56 Itinerary word
57 Praise in verse
58 Turkic language
59 "Delicious!"

DOWN
1 Game official
2 Hosp. area
3 D.C. figure
4 Plot
5 Picnic containers
6 Tempe sch.
7 Bowling lane button
8 Act parts
9 Bus ticket increases
10 Baltic feeder
11 Physiques
16 Meadow
20 Recipe amts.
21 Uses finger paint, say
22 Isaac's eldest
23 Misplaced optimism
27 Floor cover
29 Flying toy
30 Biblical garden
32 Baby's father
34 Citizen soldiers
37 Like skim milk
39 Chipmunk's kin
42 Stiller's partner
44 "La-la" lead-in
45 Sailor's saint
46 Grassland croaker
50 Addams cousin
51 Wall climber
52 Lucy of "Kill Bill"
53 Felon's flight

Solution time: 21 mins.

S	E	E		O	P	A	L		V	A	M	P
H	E	N		Z	E	R	O		E	D	I	T
F	N	D	P	A	P	F	R		R	I	G	A
			E	A	R		S	E	A	B	A	S
A	I	A	S	K	A		N	N	F			
M	I	V		S	R	S		A	N	D	E	S
P	R	O	S		F	I	G		A	I	I	S
M	A	R	T	S		B	U	S		V	F	T
			R	E	S		T	U	N	I	C	S
T	H	F	O	R	F	M		B	A	D		
Y	C	L	L		M	I	S	S	P	C	N	D
P	A	I	I		I	N	R	F		N	O	D
E	T	A	S		S	T	A	T		D	R	S

Last Friday's Answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Elisabeth Moss, 41; Anna Paquin, 41; Jennifer Lopez, 54; Kristin Chenoweth, 55.

Happy Birthday: It's up to you to set the standard by which you live. Refuse to let others dictate your destiny. Savor what's important to you and protect it from change. Embrace opportunities that ingenuity and hard work can turn into the masterpiece you envision. Actions speak louder than words, and modest progress will result in reaching your goal. Make this a year to remember. Your numbers are 8, 12, 20, 27, 32, 34, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Initiate what you want to happen. Sign up for whatever will get you to your goal. Reflect on relationships and surround yourself with people who contribute. Use your intelligence and skills to block negativity and interference; recognition will follow. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Uncertainty will kick in if someone keeps changing their mind or sending mixed messages. Be honest and direct regarding your plans, and refuse to let anyone stand between you and your chosen path. Leave nothing to chance, and you'll make progress. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Reach out to family and friends for advice. Attend events that offers insight into something you want to pursue. Don't allow the changes others make disrupt your plans. Pace yourself, and don't stop until you are happy with your results. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Participate in something you believe in, but don't let anyone take advantage of you or let your emotions lead you astray. Do your homework, and you'll know exactly how to make a difference in your life and the lives of others. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't follow the crowd. Choose to focus on development and honing skills that will allow you to head in a direction that excites you. Use your imagination, and you'll find a way to satisfy your desire and soul. Personal improvements are favored. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Precision and discipline will make a difference in whatever you pursue. Put a positive change in play, and you will maintain consistency. Stop worrying about what others do or think; follow your heart. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Follow your gut and don't look back. Hesitation will be your enemy, along with letting others step in and decide for you. Speak up and act on your own behalf, and you'll gain respect and support from those with something worthwhile to contribute. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Regulate your thoughts and feelings, be a good listener and focus on actions, not words. Take care of domestic responsibilities. Turn whatever you do into an enjoyable process with a welcome outcome. Don't let what others do or say get you down. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Be resourceful and spare yourself grief. You'll repeat the process if you jump into something unfamiliar without expert advice. Do your part, ask questions, and decide what you can do yourself and when to ask an expert. Personal improvement is favored. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Confusion will occur if you or someone close to you is emotionally manipulative. Consider the changes you want to make and the incentives that will invite others to join you. Regardless of what you do, being fair will seal the deal. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Emotional spending will leave you short. Don't make unnecessary changes when you are better off exhausting everything you already have at your fingertips. A partnership will help you get ahead, keep you grounded and ease stress. Romance and self-improvement are favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Don't trust offers presented using pressure tactics. Reach out to someone you can count on for advice before you negotiate. Take a unique approach when dealing with money matters and professional pursuits, and you'll get good results. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, persistent and focused. You are unique and unpredictable.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

3		8				7		4
	4		7	5	8		2	3
5			1	4				9
						3	4	
9		4						
		3		2		9	7	
	9	6	3	7		4	1	2
	5			8	2		3	7
7					1		9	

Difficulty: ★ 7/24

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

3	2	6	9	7	4	1	5	8
4	8	7	5	1	6	2	3	9
1	9	5	8	2	3	7	6	4
6	3	1	2	9	5	4	8	7
2	7	9	4	6	8	5	1	3
8	5	4	7	3	1	6	9	2
7	1	2	3	5	9	8	4	6
5	4	3	6	8	7	9	2	1
9	6	8	1	4	2	3	7	5

Difficulty: ★★★★

©2012 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD

By DAVID QUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

CASSITERITE **Solution: 8 letters**

T	M	T	E	M	P	E	R	A	T	U	R	E	E	Z
C	I	I	A	L	U	M	R	O	F	F	I	R	E	A
A	H	N	N	Q	T	T	S	D	I	M	A	R	Y	P
I	E	E	A	E	W	E	N	C	P	R	I	S	M	O
S	N	P	M	I	R	A	T	I	C	O	N	G	O	T
E	O	E	N	I	L	A	M	R	U	O	T	M	T	Y
N	T	S	N	G	C	I	L	C	A	E	L	D	S	N
O	S	I	N	I	N	A	C	U	D	G	N	O	U	I
D	M	E	R	I	T	R	L	I	Ⓢ	U	O	A	R	H
N	E	K	N	O	Y	N	X	T	Ⓞ	R	E	N	C	S
I	G	G	A	S	U	O	A	P	Ⓘ	S	E	I	A	S
L	U	S	T	E	R	L	M	M	Ⓛ	A	T	H	N	L
S	P	A	I	N	R	O	F	A	A	N	L	C	S	O
B	L	A	C	K	C	T	C	R	E	D	L	O	S	O
H	A	R	D	N	E	S	S	K	P	L	A	T	E	T

© 2023 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 7/24

Adamantine, Black, Cans, Chemical, China, Circuit, Colors, Compound, Congo, Crust, Crystal, England, Fire, Fluorite, Formula, Gemstone, Hardness, Indonesia, Luster, Mineral, Mining, Opaque, Ore, Oxide, Plate, Prism, Pyramids, Rare, Rock, Sand, Shiny, Soil, Solder, Spain, Streak, Temperature, Tetragonal, Tools, Topaz, Tourmaline, Twins

Last Saturday's Answer: Sharpener

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

O'Hearn's pinch-hit RBI single in 9th rallies Orioles to 6-5 win over Rays

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Ryan O'Hearn had a pinch-hit RBI single in the ninth inning and the AL East-leading Baltimore Orioles rebounded after blowing a five-run lead to beat the Tampa Bay Rays for the second time in three days, 6-5 on Saturday.

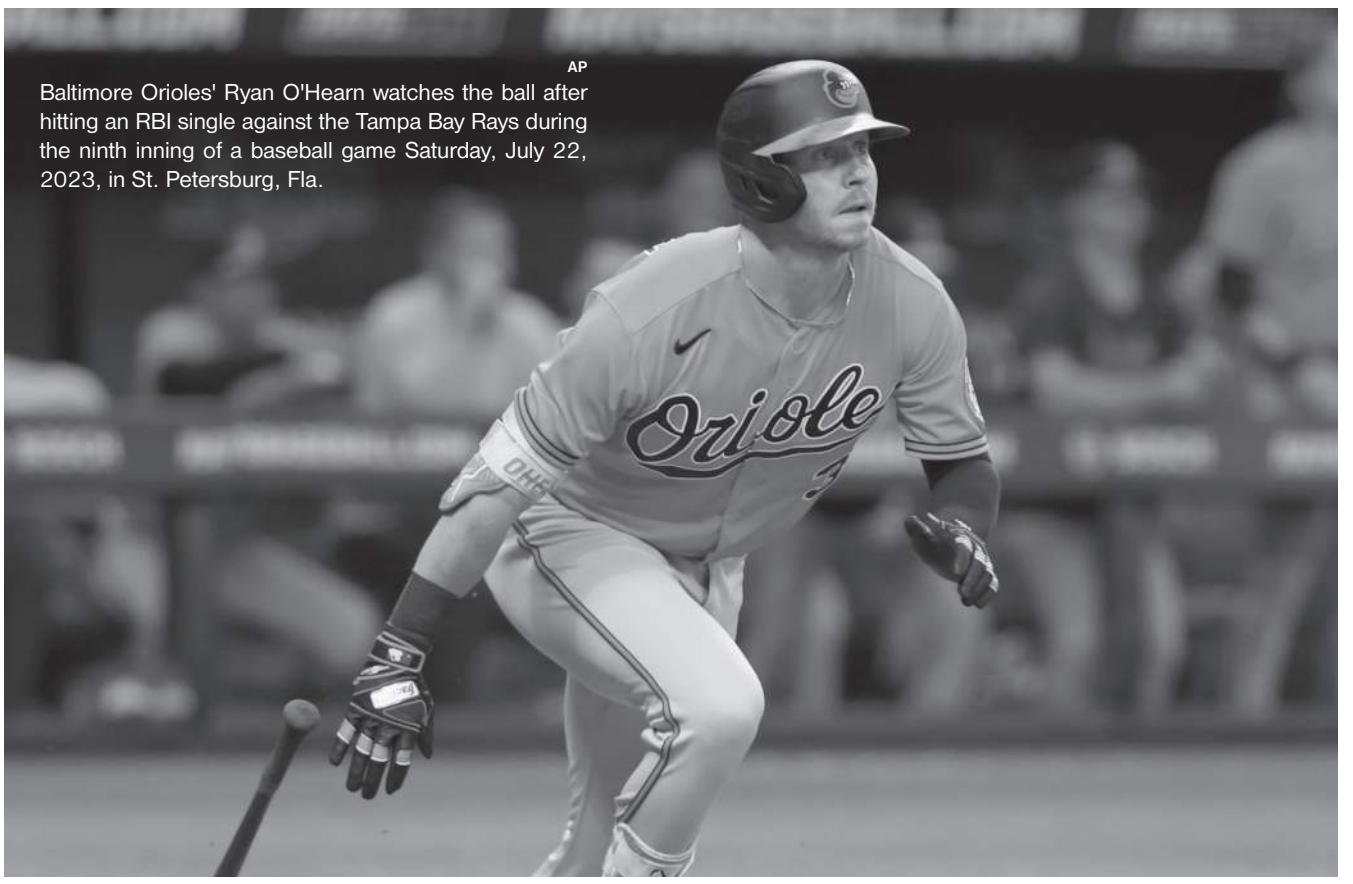
The Orioles, who have won 11 of 14, took a one-game lead over the second-place Rays. Baltimore started July 6 1/2 games behind Tampa Bay, which dropped to an AL-worst 4-13 in July.

The four-game series concludes Sunday.

Pinch-hitter Adam Frazier had a ninth-inning leadoff single off Pete Fairbanks (0-4), went to second on James McCann's sacrifice bunt and scored on O'Hearn's liner to right.

Cionel Pérez (3-1) got the final out in the eighth, and Félix Bautista worked a perfect ninth to get his 27th save.

Rays All-Star Shane McClanahan was bidding to become the majors' first 12-game winner but lasted just four innings, allowing five runs, five hits and three walks.



AP

Baltimore Orioles' Ryan O'Hearn watches the ball after hitting an RBI single against the Tampa Bay Rays during the ninth inning of a baseball game Saturday, July 22, 2023, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

DODGERS 16, RANGERS 3

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Freddie Freeman hit two more home runs, Max Muncy and J.D. Martinez also went deep as NL West-leading Los Angeles dealt AL West-leading Texas its most lopsided loss of the season.

The Dodgers, who won for the 10th time in 12 games, matched their season highs with 18 hits and five homers. Their last long ball was Jonny Deluca's three-run shot in the ninth off Texas utility player Brad Miller, who pitched the final two innings.

Freeman went 4 for 5 with his 19th and 20th homers. Dodgers rookie starter Bobby Miller (6-1) gave up Marcus Semien's homer on his second pitch, and worked six solid innings, striking out six without a walk.

Dane Dunning (8-3) had his shortest start of the season, allowing five runs over three innings.

YANKEES 5, ROYALS 2

NEW YORK (AP)—DJ LeMahieu hit the go-ahead home run in the 7th inning, Gerrit Cole struck out 10 and New York defeated Kansas City.

Giancarlo Stanton homered and drove in three runs and Anthony Volpe doubled and stole a base for the Yankees, who won their second straight game and pick up their first series win in July. New York has won 17 of the last 21 meetings with Kansas City.

Nick Pratto homered and Brady Singer struck out nine in another strong start at Yankee Stadium for the Royals, who lost for the seventh time in nine games following the All-Star break.

Cole scattered five hits and a pair of runs across 6 1/3 innings. Wandy Peralta (3-1) threw four pitches in relief of Cole in the seventh to earn the victory. Clay Holmes earned his 13th save.

CUBS 8, CARDINALS 6

CHICAGO (AP)—Cody Bellinger drove in four runs and Nico Hoerner had three of Chicago's 15 hits in a win over NL Central rival St. Louis.

Chicago trailed 1-0, 3-1, 5-3 and 6-5 before moving in front for the first time with three runs in the sixth inning. Bellinger yanked a two-run single into right field and Seiya Suzuki followed with an RBI single, giving the Cubs an 8-6 lead.

Lars Nootbaar and Nolan Gorman homered for St. Louis, which has dropped two in a row after a six-game win streak. Nootbaar had three hits, scored three times and made two impressive defensive plays in a terrific all-around performance.

Daniel Palencia (2-0) got one out for the win. Zack Thompson (2-3) was charged with all three runs in the sixth.

Adbert Alzolay worked the ninth for his ninth save,

REDS 4, DIAMONDBACKS 2

CINCINNATI (AP)—TJ Friedl, Matt McLain and Jake Fraley hit consecutive home runs in the sixth inning and Cincinnati beat Arizona for its fourth straight victory.

Diamondbacks rookie right-hander Brandon Pfaadt (0-4), just recalled from Triple-A Reno, retired 16 in a row after Spencer Steer led off the first with a single before Friedl started the power spree.

The Reds last hit three consecutive homers on July 13, 2022, when Kyle Farmer, Mike Moustakas, and Stuart Fairchild went deep at Yankee Stadium.

Reds rookie left-hander Brandon Williamson (2-2) allowed one run and three hits.

Corbin Carroll hit his 20th home run in the ninth off Alexis Diaz, who finished for his 29th save.

ROCKIES 4, MARLINS 3

MIAMI (AP)—Nolan Jones hit a three-run homer in the seventh inning and Randal Grichuk hit a go-ahead RBI single in the ninth as Colorado rallied from an early three-run deficit to beat Miami.

Grichuk's first hit of the game scored Ryan McMahon. He led off the inning with a single off reliever Tanner Scott (4-3) and went to second when pinch-hitter Elias Díaz was hit by a pitch.

Daniel Bard (4-1) worked an inning of relief and earned the victory. Justin Lawrence pitched a scoreless ninth for his seventh save of the season.

MLB-batting leader Luis Arraez hit a ground-rule double in the third and an RBI triple in the fifth that gave the Marlins a 2-0 lead. His batting average rose from .373 to .375.

METS 5, RED SOX 4, 1ST GAME
RED SOX 8, METS 6, 2ND GAME

BOSTON (AP)—Triston Casas had his first career multi-homer game, and Yu Chang and Jarren Duran also went deep off Max Scherzer in the nightcap as Boson and New York split a doubleheader.

Brandon Nimmo and Daniel Vogelbach each hit a two-run homer for the Mets before the rains came on Friday night, when the series opener was suspended in the fourth inning. After they picked things up there on Saturday afternoon, the teams traded runs and the New York held on to take the day game 5-4 for their fourth win in five games.

Casas had four hits on the day, and Masataka Yoshida had three in the night game, knocking an RBI single in the seventh just before Justin Turner's two-run homer gave Boston an 8-3 lead.

James Paxton (6-2) struck out seven in six innings to snap Boston's three-game losing streak. Scherzer was charged with five runs while striking out seven; it's the first time he's allowed four homers in an outing since his 2021 season debut.

Grant Hartwig (3-1) picked up the win in the opener, while Boston's Kutter Crawford (4-5) took the loss.

MARINERS 9, BLUE JAYS 8

SEATTLE (AP)—J.P. Crawford and Teoscar Hernández had two-run doubles as part of a five-run seventh inning and Seattle rallied to beat Toronto.

The teams combined for seven home runs, including each side having a three-homer inning. Seattle led 3-0, watched Toronto rally for leads of 5-3 and 7-4, before the Mariners finally took control with their big seventh inning.

Cal Raleigh homered twice for Seattle, while Dylan Moore and Julio Rodríguez added solo shots. Toronto's Nate Pearson (5-2) took the loss.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Brandon Belt and Kevin Kiermaier homered for the Blue Jays. Isaiah Campbell (1-0) picked up the win.

GUARDIANS 1, PHILLIES 0

CLEVELAND (AP)—Rookie Tanner Bibee struck out eight in seven dominant innings and Amed Rosario scored on a misplayed pop-up in the sixth in Cleveland's win over Philadelphia.

Bibee (6-2) limited the Phillies to two hits and one walk in his second-longest start in the majors. Enyel De Los Santos worked the eighth and All-Star closer Emmanuel Clase picked up his 27th save for the Guardians, who have won four of five.

Philadelphia's Zach Wheeler (7-5) worked seven innings, allowing five hits while striking out eight. Edmundo Sosa doubled and Trea Turner singled for the Phillies, who lost their fourth in a row.

NATIONALS 10, GIANTS 1

WASHINGTON (AP)—CJ Abrams hit a two-run homer on his bobblehead night, Josiah Gray earned his first win since June 30 and Washington routed San Francisco and moved into a position to complete its first series sweep since August 2021.

With a victory Sunday, Washington can claim its first sweep since taking both games from Toronto in August 2021. The Nationals haven't swept a three-game series since June 2021 against Pittsburgh.

San Francisco has lost four in a row since a seven-game winning streak.

Gray (7-8) settled in after walking three of the Giants' first five batters, scattering four hits and striking out four over seven innings to match his longest career outing.

Webb (8-8) allowed six runs and struck out two over 1 1/3 innings, his shortest outing in 98 career starts.

BREWERS 4, BRAVES 3

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Sal Frelick went 3 for 3, drove in the go-ahead run in the eighth inning and made two outstanding catches in his major league debut as Milwaukee rallied to beat Atlanta.

Austin Riley homered for the fifth straight game in a losing cause to tie a Braves franchise record. Riley, who hit a three-run shot, has gone 10 for 21 with six homers, 16 RBIs and nine runs over his last five games.

Frelick made sure the Brewers came all the way back. Devin Williams then preserved Milwaukee's lead by working out of a bases-loaded jam in the ninth to earn his 25th save in 27 opportunities.

Joel Payamps (4-1) earned the win with one inning of scoreless relief. Milwaukee's bullpen has thrown 27 2/3 consecutive scoreless innings.

Joe Jimenez (0-3) took the loss.

PADRES 14, TIGERS 3

DETROIT (AP)—Luis Campusano had a homer among his four hits and San Diego beat Detroit for the 4,000th victory in franchise history.

Manny Machado and Ha-Seong Kim also homered for the Padres, who trailed 3-0 after two innings.

Jackson Wolf (1-0) won his major league debut, waiting out an 84-minute rain delay in the second. He gave up three runs on six hits and a walk in five innings.

Mason Englert (4-3), who replaced Detroit starter Matt Manning after the delay, allowed nine runs and 10 hits in 2 1/3 innings.

TWINS 3, WHITE SOX 2

MINNESOTA (AP)—Christian Vásquez drove in the tying run and Michael A. Taylor followed with an RBI single, all in the seventh inning, in Minnesota's win over Chicago.

Jordan Balazovic (1-0) pitched a scoreless seventh inning and earned his first big league victory. Jhoan Duran pitched a scoreless ninth for his 17 save of the year.

Trailing 2-1 with two runners on in the seventh, Vásquez hit what he thought was a go-ahead three-run homer off reliever Gregory Santos. But, the ball hit the top of the left-field wall and was ruled a double, scoring Byron Buxton. Later in the inning, Taylor put the Twins, hitting a sharp single to center after trying unsuccessfully to bunt earlier in the at-bat. His hit four pitches later drove in Kyle Farmer.

Both Twins runs were charged to reliever Keynan Middleton (2-2), who gave up a hit and a walk in a third of an inning.

Pogačar wins Stage 20 but Vingegaard is virtually assured of win

LE MARKSTEIN, France (AP)—Tadej Pogačar and Jonas Vingegaard celebrated on the second-to-last day of the Tour de France.

Pogačar pipped the defending champion to take the penultimate stage on Saturday but it won't be enough to stop his great rival from winning the race again.

Vingegaard maintained his huge lead over two-time champion Pogačar and will surely be crowned the Tour winner after Sunday's largely ceremonial stage ends on the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

"We have to be careful not to do anything stupid but, yeah, it's amazing to take my second victory in the Tour de France and I almost cannot believe it," Vingegaard said.

Pogačar, who won in 2020 and 2021, claimed his second stage win in the 110th edition of cycling's most famous race but was unable to make up for Vingegaard's huge advantage built in the Alps. The Danish rider leads by 7 minutes, 29 seconds.

"I really appreciate the battle I had with Tadej," Vingegaard said.

Pogačar had been in outstanding form this year, winning nearly everywhere he raced. But the Slovenian crashed at Liège-Bastogne-Liège in April and needed surgery on a broken wrist. It's hard to say how much that setback impacted his Tour de France hopes.

AP

Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar, wearing the best young rider's white jersey, looks back to see the lead he has in the final sprint over Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, as he crosses the finish line to win the twentieth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 133.5 kilometers (83 miles) with start in Belfort and finish in Le Markstein Fellering, France, Saturday, July 22, 2023.

"Today I finally felt like myself again," Pogačar said. "It was great to feel good again after many days suffering and to pull off a stage win."

Saturday's 133.5-kilometer (83-mile) stage from Belfort to the mountain resort of Le Markstein was the last tough test for the riders and the 3,600 meters of climbing took its toll on many of them.

Young Spanish rider Carlos Rodriguez, who still harbored hopes of overtaking Adam Yates to third place, crashed going around a bend at 33 km. Rodriguez got back on his bike but with blood on his face, arm and leg.

American Sepp Kuss also needed medical attention after a bad crash. It was his second of the Tour.

David Gaudu crashed on the descent from the 1,163-meter-high Petit Ballon. The French rider also rode on in apparent pain.

Belgian rider Victor Campenaerts, wearing the bib for most combative rider for the second straight day, was the first to attack.

Giulio Ciccone celebrated being crowned the Tour's "King of the Mountains" at Col de la Schlucht.

"We had one plan and we did a terrific job to execute it," the Italian cyclist said. "I need to thank all my teammates. They did something crazy right from the start."

Three French riders led by local favorite Thibaut Pinot were among a group of five leaders pushing the pace up Petit Ballon. Pinot decided to go alone six kilometers before the summit, aware that a huge fan party was waiting for him. He crested the summit some 33 seconds ahead of his chasers and 90 seconds ahead of the peloton with Vingegaard and Pogačar.

A smiling Pinot was later crowned the day's most combative rider.

Pogačar attacked six kilometers before the summit of Col du Platzerwasel, followed closely by Vingegaard. They were joined by Felix Gall and later by the Yates brothers – Simon and Pogačar's teammate, Adam.

Pogačar attacked again with 2.9 kilometers to go. Again, Vingegaard stayed right on his wheel.

With 250 meters remaining, the Slovenian rider went again. Vingegaard got in front but Pogačar powered past to get the stage win with Gall in between.

Jones carving out valuable role in new owner Ishbia's leadership team

PHOENIX (AP)—James Jones was a survivor during his 14-year NBA career, a 49th overall pick from Miami who carved out a reputation as a valuable role player, contributing to three championship teams.

His second career as an NBA executive is showing similar long-term strength.

Jones, 42, is one of the unlikely architects of the Phoenix Suns recent rebuild under aggressive new owner Mat Ishbia. Jones helped land 13-time All-Star Kevin Durant in a trade deadline deal last season and was also instrumental in bringing three-time All-Star Bradley Beal to the desert in a more recent offseason blockbuster.

"I'm a guy who is singularly focused on winning, being the best teammate I can be, and being a part of the solution to the problem every team is trying to solve: How do we win a championship?" Jones said.

The Suns' recent moves certainly give the team a chance. Durant and Beal will team with a handful of holdovers like Devin Booker and Deandre Ayton next season as the Suns try to capture the NBA title that's eluded the franchise since it was formed in 1968.

The fact that Jones is still around to help make the decisions is a bit of a surprise.

Ishbia's arrival in Phoenix—he bought the team for roughly $4 billion last winter from the embattled Robert Sarver—was quickly followed by wholesale changes, particularly after the Suns were blown out by the Denver Nuggets on their home court in Game 7 of the Western Conference semifinals.

Widely-respected coach Monty Williams was fired and many figured Jones would be next. Instead, he's become a part of the team's inner-circle brain-trust, combining with Ishiba and newly-hired CEO Josh Bartelstein.

Ishbia and Jones are roughly the same age and quickly bonded over their college basketball experiences and shared vision of what builds a winner. Ishbia was a walk-on under Michigan State's Tom Izzo while Jones played for another hoops icon at Miami in Leonard Hamilton.

Maybe most importantly, Ishbia has deep pockets and a desire to win.

"When you have that type of clarity, it's easy," Jones said. "You just go out and say 'What can we do and how fast can we do it?'"

The answer to that last question? Pretty fast.

The Phoenix roster is almost unrecognizable from this point one year ago. Franchise stalwarts Mikal Bridges and Cam Johnson were shipped to Brooklyn in the Durant deal. Chris Paul, a 12-time All-Star, and Landry Shamet were sent to the Wizards as part of the package that landed Beal. Popular backup point guard Cameron Payne was traded to the Spurs.

Jones admitted that dismantling a roster that nearly won a championship in 2021 — the Suns lost to the Bucks in the Finals that season — was difficult. But it was also necessary.

"If you don't adapt in this business, you won't be here very long," Jones said.

Critics wondered how the Suns might build a roster around their talented — and expensive — star foursome of Booker, Ayton, Beal and Durant. Considering the quartet will make somewhere in the neighborhood of $160 million next season, there didn't appear to be much flexibility under the salary cap to add talented role players.

But surprisingly, the Suns were one of the early winners of free agency, agreeing to terms with six players on the first day of negotiations. Damion Lee and Josh Okogie agreed to stay in the desert while Keita Bates-Diop, Yuta Watanabe, Drew Eubanks and Chimezie Metu added much-needed depth.

In the following days, the Suns also added veteran 3-point shooter Eric Gordon and 7-foot-2 big man Bol Bol.

Not a bad haul, especially considering the circumstances. Once again, Jones' fingerprints were all over the new acquistions.

"We were extremely focused, we knew exactly what we wanted," Jones said. "Then we also had conviction: If players had a chance to understand what our vision is, had an opportunity to be part of something special, be a part of a team that's truly focused on trying to win the title, we knew the competitors and their competitive nature would give us a leg up.

"It speaks to the players we targeted. They want to win."

NBA BRIEFS

Ja Morant's friend arrested over 2022 fight at All-Star's home

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—A close friend of Memphis Grizzlies star Ja Morant has been arrested on a misdemeanor warrant over a fight during a pickup basketball game at the player's home last year. Davonte Pack, whom Morant has referred to as "my brother," was booked Wednesday into the Shelby County Jail for assault with bodily harm stemming from the July 2022 altercation in which a teenager says in a lawsuit that the All-Star guard and Pack punched him. The warrant was issued July 10 for the 24-year-old Pack. That was the same day Morant's lawyers argued in civil court that the teen's lawsuit against Morant should be dismissed because the guard acted in self-defense after the teen threw a basketball that hit Morant in the chin. Pack is scheduled for a court appearance Thursday. No criminal charges have been filed against Morant. Morant's accuser was 17 when the lawsuit was filed. It accuses Morant and Pack of assault, reckless endangerment, abuse or neglect, and infliction of emotional distress. An amended complaint identified the plaintiff as Joshua Holloway, who is now 18. Morant filed a countersuit accusing Holloway of slander, battery and assault.

Ex-NBA All-Star Kemba Walker chasing his next chance

Former NBA All-Star Kemba Walker is headed to Europe. AS Monaco said Friday it has signed Walker for the upcoming season, which will mark Walker's first playing stint in the EuroLeague. The 6-foot guard was a three-time NBA All-Star in Charlotte, and then in his first season in Boston in 2019-20. But the 33-year-old Walker has missed significant time recently with knee issues, including playing 37 games with New York in 2021-22 and just nine games with Dallas last season. Walker has averaged 19.3 points for his 12-year NBA career, which followed him almost single-handedly powering Connecticut to the 2011 NCAA championship in a remarkable late-season run. Monaco won its first French pro league title last season by beating the Metropolitans 92 and eventual No. 1 overall NBA draft pick Victor Wembanyama. ***(AP)***

NMI-Pohnpei Goodwill Basketball Games starts today

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Pohnpei men's and women's basketball teams pose for a photo upon their touchdown in the CNMI yesterday and are welcomed by Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation president James Lee, third from right, and coach Dave Apatang, far right.

In lieu of the comeback of the Micronesian Baseball Tournament, the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation is hosting the 2023 NMI-Pohnpei Goodwill Basketball Games this week starting today, Monday, July 24.

Pohnpei's men's and women's national teams arrived yesterday and are competing in 5x5 and 3x3 games against six NMI teams: Ol'Aces men and women, U17 Junior Marianas team, and the CNMI men's and women's national teams at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The 5x5 games between the women's team of Ol'Aces and Pohnpei is set to start at 5:30pm today, while the men's Ol'Aces team vs. Pohnpei's men is set at 7pm.

For tomorrow's games, the CNMI women's U17 team vs. Pohnpei is at 5:30pm, while the CNMI men's U17 team vs. Pohnpei is at 7pm.

On Wednesday, the CNMI women's national team vs Pohnpei is at 5:30pm, while the CNMI men's national team faces off against Pohnpei at 7pm.

The 3x3 double-elimination games, sanctioned by FIBA, are set for Thursday and Friday—three teams each from both NMI and Pohnpei. It starts at 5:30pm.

The CNMI U17 men's team include Michael Mercado Jr., Charlz Sanchez, Gino Asauo, Jezpher Navarro, Reed Camacho, Heman Addy, Marc Tengco, Austin Diaz, M.D. Islam, Ali Ortiz, Kian Helgen, and Lance Lerio. They are coached by Jake Maratita, Jose Tudela, and Preston Basa, and team manager is Mike Mercado.

The CNMI women's national team is made up of Kaia Travilla, Maddie Alegre, Marlene Lumabi, Mikki Kautz, Angel Roligat, Destiny Pangelinan, Yasmeen Younis, Cassie Camacho, Rae Ramarui, Quina Flores, Fiona Bucalig, and Sha Aina Mendoza, who are coached by Dave Apatang, while the men's national team consists of Lucio Aldan, Kristian Tapay, Ervin Villarin, John Kae Raquepo, Keith Santos, Coby Santos, Greg Sablan, Jude Sablan, Eli Garcia, Frankie Satur, Jack Aranda, Shane Deleon Guerrero, and Jeff Castro. They are coached by James Lee and Rufino Aguon.

The Pohnpei men's team includes Glen Torres, Michael Mallarme, Rickson Shoniber, Hart Yamada, Aurelio Pluhs, Trexler Primo, Shawn Aguon, BK Elias, Zack Helgenberger, Makani Damarlane, Holden Ioanis, Connor Boylan, Oppa Miingi, and Jack Jack, and are coached by Benamin Peterson and Cassidy Shoniber.

The Pohnpei women's team are Caiitlin Nanpei, Keavae Adams, Vanessa Helgenberger, Veronica Helgenberger, Sylvania Seneres-Amor, Kaimi Youngstrom, Myra Joakim, Jaylevonie Kostka, Esther Edward, Charlotte Swingly, Chantel Ekiek, and Latoya Ponapart, who are coached by Randy Helgenberger and Nefertti Davis.

The entrance fee is $2 and will benefit the NMI's national basketball program.

The CNMI was supposed to host the Micronesian Baseball Tournament this month with teams from Guam, Yap, Palau, and Pohnpei, but only Pohnpei was able to make the trip.

SWIMMERS

From page 20

noon and they're usually back at their hotel by 6:30pm.

Aside from Kimura and Villacrusis, NMISF vice president John Hirsh is also part of Team NMI in the World Championships and is representing the CNMI in several FINA meetings taking place during the competition.

The NMISF would also like to thank the following for helping the swimmers and coaches fund their trip to Japan: CNMI Legislature, Saipan Mayor Ramon B. Camacho, Aqua Resort Club, BAB Restaurant, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Dae Jang Kum Restaurant, Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods, Gold's Gym Saipan, Islander Rent-a-Car, Korean House Restaurant, Lohas Massage, Mobil Oil Marianas, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Pacific Quick Print, Shell Marianas Corp., Saipan World Resort, Zen Corp. Zoom Chicken, Saipan Swim Club parents, Tsunami Saipan parents, and all who supported NMISF's fundraising activities.

LA

From page 20

Sports Hall of Famer Jeff Race and his up-and-coming lieutenant, Colin Ramsey.

"I am so grateful to have an amazing coach like Jeff Race. He has been supporting and helping me a lot to become a better player, also coach Colin helped me with playing matches and physical training so definitely my game improved and became stronger this year out of all their support."

Race pretty much summed up Lam's success in Lautoka to five key factors—talent, dedication, sweat, love of the game, and parental support. He, however, stopped short of anointing him as the next big thing as far as CNMI tennis is concerned.

"I don't think it's entirely fair to say that he is the future. Lots of these kids are working hard. But he is definitely leading the pack and doing the things he needs to do to succeed. Hopefully several of these other kids will go on to play college tennis as well," he said.

The many time Coach of the Year, however, admitted that Lam could join the long line of island tennis players that went on to gain college scholarships.

"Don't forget we have about seven young adults playing college tennis, so he is the youngest of the brightest stars," he said.

Registration open for MTEC Golf Classic

Registration is now open for the 2023 Marianas Tourism Education Council Golf Classic to be held during Labor Day weekend on Sept. 2, 2023, at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort west course in Saipan.

Tournament proceeds will be used to fund the education work of the non-profit organization Marianas Tourism Education Council, which focuses on community outreach and school tourism MY WAVE (Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically) Clubs.

"When the MTEC was first organized in 2002, the founders were from both the private sector and the government's administration.," said MTEC chair Vicky Benavente. "Twenty-one years later, the MTEC still engages with these stakeholders who understand the importance of the tourism industry in The Marianas."

Registration is $120 until Aug. 25, 2023. After Aug. 25, registration increases to $140. Optional play is $30. Only 144 players will be registered. No refunds will be issued after Aug. 25. Registration—including payment—is being accepted at LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort (credit card or cash only) and the Marianas Visitors Authority office (cash or check only) on Beach Road, Garapan, in the Gold Beach Hotel building. Checks should be made payable to Marianas Tourism Education Council. Registration forms and sponsorship details are now available on The Marianas Calendar at www.mymarianas.com.

The tournament format will be medal play. Flight categories are Championship (0-5), A Flight (6-10), B Flight (11-16), C Flight (17+), Ladies, Senior (ages 55-60), and Super Senior (ages 61 and above).

Showtime on game day is 6am, with a shotgun start at 7am. The awards luncheon will immediately follow the tournament.

For more information, contact Marianas Tourism Golf Classic Committee chair Martin Duenas at mduenas@mymarianas.com or committee member Jack Aranda at jaranda@mymarianas.com or call (670) 664-3200/1. ***(PR)***

FALCONS

From page 20

ror, but that was all the damage they could do, which was enough as the Bears could not reply in their next at-bat.

The No. 3 seed Falcons blew the No. 6 seed Blue Jays out of the air in a one-sided game.

It was a game marred with many defensive errors that the Falcons capitalized on and the Blue Jays could not dig themselves out of the hole they dug.

After four scoreless innings, the Blue Jays finally scored in the fifth on an RBI single by Beferson Atan. Nate Torres scored their second and last run in the next inning.

By the sixth inning, the Falcons had scored five runs and were looking for more. They then scored six runs after the hungry lineup that made seven hits which scored six runs. Ian Norita had a perfect night as he went 4-4 at-bats and scored two runs, while Benen went 3-4 with one RBI and two runs.

The only playoff games left are between the Falcons and the No. 2 seed Junior Nationals; and the Brewers vs. the No. 1 seed Cardinals. Winners of those games will face off in the championship round that is yet to be scheduled.

The playoffs will be on hold to make way for the 2023 SBL-UOG Baseball Friendship Tournament from tomorrow, July 25, to Friday, July 28.

O'Hearn's pinch-hit RBI single in 9th rallies Orioles to 6-5 win over Rays

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

NMI-Pohnpei Goodwill Basketball Games starts today

PAGE 19

Swimmers on deck at World Championships

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jakey Deleon Guerrero will be the first to see action among CNMI swimmers when he competes in the 100m breaststroke today in the 20th FINA World Championships in Fukuoka, Japan.

Two days later, Deleon Guerrero will again plunge into the pool, this time swimming in the 50m breaststroke.

It will be Shoko Litulumar's turn on July 26 when she makes her debut in the 50m backstroke. It will be followed by Isaiah Aleksenko and Maria Batallones getting their crack in the 100m butterfly and 50m butterfly, respectively, two days later on July 28.

The following day, Litulumar, Aleksenko, and Batallones cap the CNMI's participation in the World Aquatics Championships by swimming the 50m freestyle, 50m backstroke, and 50m breaststroke, respectively, on July 29.

CNMI national swimming coach Hiroyuki Kimura said all four swimmers are in high spirits and "feel so good!" in the lead up to the World Championship.

As for them finally training in an official pool after landing in Japan a full week before the competition, the Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center head coach said it's everything he expected.

"Everything is going smoothly according to the schedule we made. Both at Jyounan City pool and at Fukuoka university pool, the NMI team has really received good care. Starting today, July 23, we will increase our swimming speed," he said.

Kimura said they also have the opportunity to dip their toes in the Marine Messe A swimming pool, which is where the actual competition for the 20th FINA World Championships is taking place.

"The competition venue gets very crowded, so the NMI team gets there first in the morning and starts practicing in an empty pool."

He said they usually eat breakfast at 6am and leave to catch the shuttle bus to the venue at 6:40am as the competition pool opens at 7am.

Kimura, who is being assisted in Fukuoka by former CNMI national swimmer Christian Villacrusis, said their training time is two hours in the morning and another two hours in the after-

See SWIMMERS on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Isaiah Aleksenko, Maria Batallones, Shoko Litulumar, and Jakey Deleon Guerrero pose for a photo at the Marine Messe A swimming pool in Fukuoka, Japan.

La Hunn stays in Fiji for 2 ITF tourneys

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

La Hunn Lam is not leaving Fiji just yet after winning both the boys 14 singles and doubles championships in last week's 2023 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships.

The 13-year-old earned an invite to two International Tennis Federation competitions following his impressive showing in the POJC in Lautoka.

"I feel so lucky and excited to have an opportunity to play two ITF tournaments. I know it's high level to win the tournaments since it's 18-and-under and have many good players from all over the world, but I will do my best to win one match at a time, it will be a great experience for me," he said.

As for winning the doubles with teammate Nason Wessel, Lam said he couldn't have capped his POJC stint better than winning the age group doubles with his good friend, who incidentally finished third in the boys 14 singles.

Lam

"It's always super fun and exciting to play doubles, especially when I get to play with my good friend Nason. Yes, it was very enjoyable."

As for the coaching he received during the POJC, Lam said he owes the twin victories to the excellent mentorship provided by CNMI

See LA on Page 19

Falcons, Brewers shoot down foes as playoffs start

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Falcons and Brewers shot down their foes in the start of the single elimination playoff games of the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League season at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

The long-awaited playoffs finally started last Thursday after many delays as the Falcons swooped the Blue Jays out of contention, 12-2, while the Brewers put up a good fight against the CK Bears, 10-7, last Friday.

The No. 4 seed Brewers and No. 5 seed Bears brought their A-games as it was a rollercoaster 10-inning fight to the finish.

LEIGH GASES

Blue Jays third baseman Kyle Foreman catches a throw from the catcher a nick too late as a Falcons baserunner stole third base safely during their playoff game in the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League last Thursday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Tied at seven apiece in the ninth inning, the nail-biter game went into extra innings and the Brewers stamped their ticket to the next round when they scored three unanswered runs for the win.

Shane Mallens made it on base and came home on a single by Verlance Secharmidal. Secharmidal then came home on a defensive error by the Bears as Kyle Hocog was in scoring position.

Franko Nakamura hit the third run in from a single and reached third base on an er-

See FALCONS on Page 19